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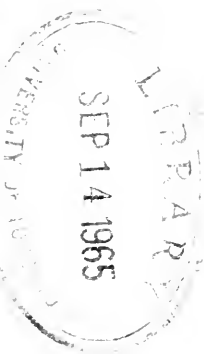
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The Canterbury Poets.

EDITED BY WILLIAM SHARP.

WALT WHITMAN.



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* * FOR FULL LIST OF THE VOLUMES IN THIS SERIES,
SEE CATALOGUE AT END OF BOOK.

POEMS OF WALT WHIT-
MAN (FROM 'LEAVES¹⁴
OF GRASS'), WITH INTRO-
DUCTION BY ERNEST RHYS.



LONDON:
WALTER SCOTT, LIMITED,
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WHEN the true poet comes, how shall we know him—
By what clear token,—manners, language, dress?
Or shall a voice from Heaven speak and show him :
Him the swift healer of the Earth's distress !
Tell us that when the long-expected comes
At last, with mirth and melody and singing,
We him may greet with banners, beat of drums,
Welcome of men and maids, and joy-bells ringing ;
And, for this poet of ours,
Laurels and flowers.

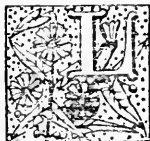
Thus shall ye know him—this shall be his token :
Manners like other men, an unstrange gear ;
His speech not musical, but harsh and broken
Shall sound at first, each line a driven spear ;
For he shall sing as in the centuries olden,
Before mankind its earliest fire forgot ;
Yet whoso listens long hears music golden.
How shall ye know him ? ye shall know him not
Till ended hate and scorn,
To the grave he's borne.

—RICHARD WATSON GILDER



Walt Whitman.

“Have the elder races halted?
Do they droop and end their lesson, wearied over there
beyond the seas?
We take up the task eternal, and the burden and the
lesson,
Pioneers! O Pioneers!”



LONG ago were tenderly bequeathed by the greatest spirit who ever moved on earth—and, may we not say, the greatest poet?—an obscure young man of divine presence, whose soul was as a clear flame of truth in a dark and haunted night, two precepts to his disciples. The first of the two, understood amiss, travestied by men to inglorious ends of caste and worldly advancement, was fatally separated from its fellow more and more in the after theories of religion. The second, which, in use, has been so grandly named the Golden Rule, though always potent for love and human fellowship, has in the perfect meaning the

Christ gave to it been often sorrowfully lost to us. All along it has, like its fellow, been in its full purity more the sacred instinct of the few pure hearts than of the many. But now, more than ever, in the surge and fret of later time, when its need is inestimably greater, its spirit seems often lost and perverted, while the letter of its tradition is being told and retold with unlimited unction. To restore this spirit to heroic and active influence among men were a poet's work worthy of the highest, and it is this which is the most immediate significance of the "task eternal, and the burden and the lesson," which Walt Whitman has taken up,—this, perhaps, the most dominant aspect for us in England to-day of Walt Whitman's work as a poet.

In point of pure humanity, then, this new song of America is most significant for us. But if stress is laid on *Leaves of Grass* as a new poetry of love and comradeship at this time of social mis-giving, when rich and poor alike make us keenly feel the need of the spirit of human love, the poetic force and quality Walt Whitman brings to aid him in his task must not be overlooked. It is no sentimental valley of the rose and nightingale,—no moonlit dreamland of romance,—whence he draws his inspiration. His poems, whatever critics may say of their art-form and harmonies, are touched with a wider spirit, and in their sweeping music take in the whole scope of Time and Space open to the modern mind. So, if the command was laid upon Walt Whitman to sing "the life-long love of comrades," which is the song of the new Democracy, it was his, too, to first essay the vaster

harmony still of the far-stretched universe as modernly known. The conjunction of this greatness of poetic vision, fearlessly equal to the far range of later science, with the most intimate sympathy with the individual human heart, is what makes Whitman so powerfully suggestive to the younger minds of to-day. In his hopeful gaze into the future, the doubts and misgivings of the time are laid at rest; as he sings of the new, purer Democracy, the social distempers and miseries of this particular hour lose their finality of woe, and are seen to be but a passing stride in the eternal human march.

“One’s-self I sing, a simple separate person,
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.

Of life immense in passion, pulse and power,
Cheerful, for freest action form’d under the laws divine,
The Modern Man I sing.”

The Modern Man! whom most of us are afraid to approach in poetry, or from any high standpoint at all,—Walt Whitman has resolutely faced him, and sounded the hopes and fears of his potential being. The foregoing passage from “Inscriptions,” poems introductory to the main body of the *Leaves of Grass*, may be called indeed the key-note of Walt Whitman’s unusual music. Struck thus at the outset, it will be found dominant throughout the book; with it sounding insistently in our ears we shall not be likely to mistake the great intention of this new poetry.

The best way to approach a poet is through his personality; it is only true poets who can bear to be so approached. In attempting to get at the

bearing upon our day and generation of Walt Whitman as a poet, we must first of all make friends with him as a man, for soon it is found that his life and personality are absolutely one with his poetry. It is impossible, indeed, to thoroughly apprehend the *Leaves of Grass* without knowing and being thrilled by the magnetic individuality that informs them throughout. And Walt Whitman has not stinted the American people of opportunity to see and know him familiarly ; his life has been a remarkably open and undisguised one from the first. Visiting him now in his quiet home in Camden, New Jersey, one would find a white-haired venerable man of sixty-six, but it is the Walt Whitman of thirty years back whom one must realise, as he was when, in his prime of manhood and poetic power, he began to write the *Leaves of Grass* :—

“ I now thirty-seven years old in perfect health begin,
Hoping to cease not till death.”

Judged by the conventional good-society standard of appearances, it is to be feared that Walt Whitman would have then seemed an alarmingly natural sort of being, just as his poetry judged by approved rhymester's rules seems particularly audacious. There is a description by W. D. O'Connor, written ten years later it is true, but which will help us to realise his presence better perhaps than anything else. It is to be found in O'Connor's well-known essay, “ The Good Grey Poet ” :—

“ For years past thousands of people in New York, in Brooklyn, in Boston, in New Orleans, and latterly in Washington, have seen, even as I saw two hours ago, tallying,

one might say, the streets of our American cities, and fit to have for his background and accessories their streaming populations and ample and rich façades, a man of striking masculine beauty—a poet—powerful and venerable in appearance ; large, calm, superbly formed ; oftenest clad in the careless, rough, and always picturesque costume of the common people ; resembling and generally taken by strangers for some great mechanic or stevedore, or seaman, or grand labourer of one kind or another ; and passing slowly in this guise, with nonchalant and haughty step along the pavement, with the sunlight and shadows falling around him. The dark sombrero he usually wears was, when I saw him just now, the day being warm, held for the moment in his hand ; rich light an artist would have chosen lay upon his uncovered head, majestic, large, Homeric, and set upon his strong shoulders with the grandeur of ancient sculpture. I marked the countenance, serene, proud, cheerful, florid, grave ; the brow seamed with noble wrinkles ; the features, massive and handsome, with firm blue eyes ; the eyebrows and eyelids especially showing that fulness of arch seldom seen save in the antique busts ; the flowing hair and fleecy beard, both very grey, and tempering with a look of age the youthful aspect of one who is but forty-five ; the simplicity and purity of his dress, cheap and plain, but spotless, from snowy falling collar to burnished boot, and exhaling faint fragrance ; the whole form surrounded with manliness as with a nimbus, and breathing in its perfect health and vigour, the august charm of the strong.”

This depiction of Walt Whitman is valuable as being a direct portrayal, taken on the spot as it were, and showing the magnetic effect of his personal presence, affecting those who came in contact with him to an extraordinary degree, so that indeed it may be that they became poets in their turn, and somewhat idealistic in their accounts. Dr. Maurice Bucke in his vivid book upon Whitman tells

of a certain young man who went to see the poet—being already familiar with *Leaves of Grass*—and who by means of only a casual and ordinary talk was filled with a strange physical and spiritual exaltation, which lasted for some weeks ; what is still more impressive, however, it is added that the young fellow's whole tenour of life was altered by this slight contact,—and that his character, outer life, and entire spiritual being were elevated and purified in a very remarkable way. This might seem exaggerated, but this special account is attested beyond the suspicion even of exaggeration, and it is typical, it will be found, of Walt Whitman's native influence and stimulus throughout. We have the direct testimony of many men of genius to prove this. From the involuntary tribute of Abraham Lincoln,—“Well, he looks like a Man!”—to the more conscious homage of John Burroughs, the poet-naturalist, whose little books of nature we have most of us been reading lately in their charming Edinburgh reprint, all sorts and conditions of men indeed have given their word for him.

To get at the full bearing of his life upon his poems, however, let us return to the very beginning, and trace, briefly at least, his boyhood and youth. In his *Specimen Days and Collect*, an autobiographical volume of incomparable prose-notes, as well as in many of the poems, Walt Whitman refers constantly to the great influence of his early childish days in their free open-air environment upon his mental and spiritual growth. He was, indeed, wonderfully happy in his early surroundings,—in his vigorous healthy parentage

and home influences. Born on Long Island, or Paumanok, its Indian name, by which he always calls it, in the State of New York, of a stalwart race of farmers, in 1819, the freedom of sun and wind was his, in a wide country-side, with rising hills around, and the sea that he has sung so affectionately, with such deep sympathy, so that its harmonies seem to have subtly informed his poetry, close by. Some of the early pages in *Specimen Days* give a delightful and vivid description of these boyish haunts, and the old homesteads of the Whitmans and the Van Velsors—his mother's family—as visited after more than forty years' absence. A note by John Burroughs, describing briefly the house where Walt Whitman was born and bred, says:—"The Whitmans lived in a long storey-and-a-half farm-house, hugely timbered, which is still standing. A great smoke-canopied kitchen, with vast hearth and chimney, formed one end of the house, where rousing wood fires gave both warmth and light on winter nights. . . . I must not forget to mention that both the families were near enough to the sea to behold it from the high places, and to hear in still hours the roar of the surf; the latter, after a storm, giving a peculiar sound at night." There is a temptation to quote a great many of Whitman's own notes about the neighbourhood, but only a brief excerpt or two can be given. "The spreading Hempstead plains in the middle of the island," give us one such note full of pastoral feeling. "I have often been out on the edges of these plains toward sundown, and can yet recall in fancy the intermin-

able cow-processions, and hear the music of the tin or copper bells clanking far or near, and breathe the cool of the sweet and slightly aromatic evening air, and note the sunset." Again and again he touches on the sea with an affection and a truth of description which make these careless jottings unspeakably suggestive. "As I write," he says in one place, "the whole experience comes back to me after the lapse of forty and more years—the soothing rustle of the waves, and the saline smell—boyhood's times, the clam-digging, barefoot and with trousers rolled up—hauling down the creek—the perfume of the sedge-meadows—the hay-boat, and the fishing excursions;—or, of later years, little voyages down and out New York bay, in the pilot boats." While still a child his father moved to Brooklyn—then a country-town, thoroughly rural in character—"at that time broad fields and country roads everywhere around," and still within easy reach of the sea. Here his school-days, and his general apprenticeship to life as printer, journalist, magazine-writer, and so on were mainly passed, up to his twentieth year, when he went to New York. A strong, healthy boyhood and youth his seems to have been throughout, out of which the poetic and literary faculty natively grew in a way as unlike the routine academic tradition as well could be. Give a healthy boy books like the *Waverley Novels*, and the *Arabian Nights*, in such a life as this, with a suggestive sufficiency of mental and physical work, and you have given him what mere formal scholasticism will never accomplish for him, in true poetic insight.

The next twelve years, spent variously in street and field, in New York, Brooklyn, New Orleans, and other cities, with long intervals always of country life in the wide sweep of valley and plain and seashore, during which he sounded the teeming life of the fast-growing United States, may be deemed, says Dr. Bucke, the special preparation-time for the writing of the *Leaves of Grass*. Although, accordingly, one would like to comment at length upon these years of young manhood, it is unnecessary. The reader will find its true history and illustrations in the poems themselves. In some respects, however, the more detailed accounts possible in prose, given in *Specimen Days*, cast valuable added light upon this probation-time, and his great zest for certain sides of life. His "passion for ferries," for instance, that finds final outcome in the well-known poem, "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," has a characteristic note. Referring to the Fulton Ferry, curiously identified with his life in Brooklyn and New York, he writes:—"Almost daily I crossed in the boats, often up in the pilot-houses, where I could get a full sweep, absorbing shows, accompaniments, surroundings. What oceanic currents, eddies, underneath; the great tides of humanity also, with ever shifting movements. Indeed, I have always had a passion for ferries; to me they afford inimitable, streaming, never-failing, living poems. The river and bay scenery, all about New York island, any time of a fine day—the hurrying, splashing sea-tides—the changing panorama of steamers . . . the myriads of white-sail'd schooners, sloops, skiffs, and the

marvellously beautiful yachts . . . what refreshment of spirit such sights and experiences gave me years ago, and many a time since." In the same way are described experiences of the teeming streets; the omnibuses, and the always typical race, since old English coaches first ran, of drivers; the theatres and their plays and players, and, with special stress, the operas and famous singers, for Whitman was always enthusiastically susceptible to music of all kinds.

To this tumultuous wealth of experience succeeds naturally the preparation, and then at last the publication, of the *Leaves of Grass* volume, which marks memorably the year 1855. A great deal of the matter found in the present volume has been added since the issue of this first edition—a thin royal octavo, generally described as a quarto, of ninety-four pages; but the significance of Whitman's departure from the old routine of poetry was marked in it in a way that no further addition could make more striking. It is not strange, therefore, that the book gained scant recognition. It was not until Emerson sent to Walt Whitman what was really his first recognition from the literary world, the now famous letter of greeting, that the book became at all known. A characteristic passage or two from this letter may be given:—"I am not blind to the worth of the wonderful gift of *Leaves of Grass*. I find it the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed. . . . I give you joy of your free and brave thought. I have great joy in it. I find incomparable things,

said incomparably well, as they must be. I find the courage of treatment which so delights us, and which large perception only can inspire. . . . I greet you at the beginning of a great career, which yet must have had a long foreground somewhere for such a start. . . ." Of this letter, which was published eventually in the *New York Tribune*, Dr. Bucke says:—"Though it could not arrest, it did service in partially offsetting the tide of adverse feeling and opinion which overwhelmingly set in against the poet and his book." And in the same chapter he notes:—"The first reception of *Leaves of Grass* by the world was in fact about as disheartening as it could be. Of the thousand copies of this 1855 edition, some were given away, most of them were lost, abandoned, or destroyed." Of this thousand, however, certain of the copies had a history not noted in this instance, but told to the present writer by William Bell Scott, the well-known painter and poet, who thus became the means of introducing Walt Whitman to the English republic of letters. The summer following the publication of the book, that is in 1856, a man, James Grindrod by name, arrived in Sunderland from the United States, with a stock of American books—surplus copies, remainders, and so on—among which were the copies of *Leaves of Grass* mentioned. These books he disposed of by a curious system of dealing, called hand-selling, a rough and ready sort of auction, by which an article is first put up at a certain price and then gradually brought down until it finds a purchaser. This unlicensed street auctioneering most of those who are familiar

with north-country towns and their market days must have often witnessed, and in this way certain copies of *Leaves of Grass* fell into the hands of Thomas Dixon—a well-known native of Sunderland, to whom Ruskin wrote the famous letters ultimately published as “Time and Tide by Weare and Tyne.” Thomas Dixon in his turn sent three of the copies thus acquired to William Bell Scott, who at once perceiving the unique quality of the book, sent forthwith one copy, which has become in its way historical, to William Michael Rossetti. For this copy gave the germinal suggestion of W. M. Rossetti’s volume of ten years later—“Selected Poems by Walt Whitman,” which for long well served as the only representative of the poet in England. It is noteworthy in relation to this episode that Mr. William Bell Scott, who first gave greeting and encouragement to another poet, of quite opposite order—a poet of romanticism like Dante Gabriel Rossetti—should act also as the herald of Walt Whitman—poet above everything of the actual, and the higher realism.

Further leaves were added to *Leaves of Grass* out of the abounding experiences of the years between 1855 and 1862, over which we must leap hastily to the outbreak of the Civil War,—an event of heroic importance in Whitman’s life. It was a heroic opportunity indeed, and he used it like a hero, serving with passionate devotedness as a nurse to the wounded. The news of his brother’s wound first called him hurriedly to the seat of war, and thus beginning his ministry, he tended

the wounded soldiers with a love and tenderness which with his peculiar invigorative influence had effects sometimes almost miraculous. And as he bore himself in this ordeal of death and horror of blood, so he afterwards sang. No war since rumours of war first began ever had such a record as is to be found in his war-poems, from the stirring "First O Songs for a Prelude," to the final strains,—*"Spirit whose work is done," "Adieu O Soldiers,"* and the beautiful last of the series, *"To the leaven'd soil they trod,"* wherein he tells with such exquisite imaginative suggestion of untying the tent ropes for the last time and letting the freshness of the morning wind, sunned and scented with the restoring scent of grass and all growing things, go blowing through, sweeping away for ever the clinging odours of war and death which had made the air sickly and terrible for so long, while the eye sent its glance with a thrill of escape to the wide, calm sweep of hills and plains in the distant sunlight, instinct with the sentiment of restored peace and beauty.

But at the war's end it was not the same robust, virile man who came out of that hospital tent. "Three unflinching years of work in that terrible suspense and excitement changed him," says Dr. Bucke, "from a young to an old man. Under the constant and intense moral strain to which he was subjected . . . he eventually broke down. The doctors called his complaint 'hospital malaria,' and perhaps it was; but that splendid physique was sapped by labour, watching, and still more by the emotions, dreads, deaths, uncertainties of three

years, before it was possible for hospital malaria or any similar cause to overcome it. This illness (the first he ever had in his life), in the hot summer of 1864, he never entirely recovered from—and never will." He hardly gave himself even time for a temporary recovery before returning to his hospital work, between which and his occupation as a clerk in the Government offices he divided his time up to the war's end.

There is no need perhaps to dwell here upon the story of his stupid dismissal from one office by a certain benighted official because of the alleged immorality of *Leaves of Grass*, though it was this that provoked W. D. O'Connor to his remarkable, if rather combative, manifesto on the poet's behalf, entitled "The Good Grey Poet." This was in 1868. It must be kept in mind, however, that this was only an extreme instance of the social and literary persecution which was levelled at him from the first. "To the pure all things are pure";—it was from this standpoint that Walt Whitman wrote. But there were critics who, instead of meeting with courtesy this poetic attempt to raise noble functions, long ignobly tainted with obscenity, to their true dignity and natural relation in the great scheme of earth and heaven, attacked him with incredible viciousness and rancour. As, however, considerations of Mrs. Grundy have caused the omission of the poems objected to in the present volume, there is no need to dwell further upon the matter here.

There are many delightful glimpses to be got in John Burroughs's *Notes*, and in his capital little

book, *Birds and Poets*, as well as from other sources quoted in the *Life*, of Walt Whitman's way of life in Washington during the following years; until 1873, in fact. In these various notes he is seen facing life with almost the same exuberant vigour as in the first heat of youth, only tempered a little by the inroads of time and the ill-health incurred in the war. One account speaks of his being seen daily "moving around in the open air, especially fine mornings and evenings, observing, listening to, or socially talking with all sorts of people, policemen, drivers, market men, old women, the blacks, or dignitaries." It continues:—"Altogether, perhaps, the good, grey poet is rightly located here. Our wide spaces, great edifices, the breadth of our landscape, the ample vistas, the splendour of our skies, night and day, with the national character, the memoirs of Washington and Lincoln, and others that might be named, make our city, above all others, the one where he fitly belongs. Walt Whitman is now in his fifty-second year, hearty and blooming, tall, with white beard and long hair. The older he gets the more cheerful and gay-hearted he grows."

In spite of light heart and cheery temper his ill-health increased upon him, and culminated at last in a paralytic seizure, in February 1873, from which he had almost recovered when in May the same year his mother died somewhat suddenly in Camden, New Jersey, in his presence. "That event," says his chronicler, "was a terrible blow to him, and after the occurrence he became much worse. He left Washington for good, and took up

his residence in Camden. . . . And now for several years," it continues, "his life hung upon a thread. Though he suffered at times severely, he never became dejected or impatient. It was said by one of his friends that in that combination of illness, poverty, and old age, Walt Whitman has been more grand than in the full vigour of his manhood. For along with illness, pain, and the burden of age, he soon had to bear poverty also." Of his poverty there is no need to say more than that it resulted from traits of generosity and kindness that a money-making world might call imprudence, but that the poets have conspired in their one-sided way to call human nature. Recovering somewhat as time went by, so he has lived on, up to the present day, taking still the same delight in nature and in men, exploring the old country-sides and visiting new ones, publishing new editions of *Leaves of Grass*, and issuing, too, the special outcome of these later years, the unique book of prose autobiographical jottings already alluded to, *Specimen Days and Collect*, "the brightest and palest *Diary of an Invalid*," says Dr. Bucke, "ever written—a book unique in being the expression of strength in infirmity—the wisdom of weakness—so bright and translucent, at once of the earth, earthy, and spiritual as of the sky and stars. Other books of the invalid's room require to be read with the blinds drawn down and the priest on the threshold ; but this sick man's chamber is the lane, and by the creek or sea-shore—always with the fresh air and the open sky overhead."

Along with *Specimen Days* were written from

time to time further poems, and added to the previous collections of *Leaves of Grass*. The latter volume was also revised, and its arrangement unified, certain of the poems which repeated what was also given in others being left out, and the whole re-touched and altered so as to give a certain epic unity that was rather lacking before. This brings us to consider the poems in themselves, and their full bearing in life and in letters. At once, from the first glance at Whitman's poetry, the reader will see that it is utterly, incomparably unlike anything our ordinary rhymesters have accustomed us to. So apparently abrupt a departure in poetic form and diction may at first cause a certain feeling of distrust. But looking closer, it is soon discovered that here is not, as has been alleged with much asseveration, the freak of a writer trying to be eccentric at all hazards, but the genuine outcome of a quite new and vastly extended apprehension of life and letters. If Walt Whitman had merely come forward with a re-presentment of the ordinary poetaster's topics,—rose-water agonies, drawing-room romances, and so on, such a departure might well be cavilled at. But here comes a poet who has set himself resolutely to deal with the vast developments of the Nineteenth Century, all the teeming life and work of the Americas and of the wider world still, under aspects startlingly different in their scope and tremendous significance to anything the world has known before, and we quarrel with him, forsooth, because he has not expressed himself in elegiacs, or the measures of the time of Queen Elizabeth. In life, in

science, in philosophy, even in religion, let us be liberal. But in poetry :—No ! there is safety in conservatism. This is really what it amounts to.

A briefest backward glance through the history of letters teaches another conclusion ; constantly, it will be found, the order of poetic expression is changing and developing. But we do not need to make any far historical excursion for light on the subject : the experience of almost every poet will show us the simple rationale of the matter. The first literary instinct of the young writer is always to transcend the traditional means of utterance ; the conventional forms have lost their vital response to the subject, he feels ; they want re-adjusting, renewing. As he goes on he reconciles in time the new need with the old equipment, bringing in as much fresh force and quality as his genius and energy can satisfactorily compass. This achievement of renovated modes of utterance is of course largely dependent upon the new conditions of life, and therefore of literary subject-matter, amid which he is placed. But what must be specially remarked, it is not usually from too ardent a renascence of words and their art forms that a writer fails in the translation of life, but usually from his being overawed by tradition. Convention is the curse of poetry, as it is the curse of everything else, in which at a second remove the outward show can be made to pass muster for the inward reality. Now, the hastiest glimpse at the conditions under which a poet who has attempted to deal with the whole scope of the new civilisation, and with all that it implies of new science, new philosophy,

and so on, is placed, will show at once that an order of things so vastly different from any order of the past must require a new poetic approach. This new approach Walt Whitman has set himself courageously to accomplish, and whatever exception is taken to the details of his method, there is no young writer, with an eye to the vast human needs of the time, and not hopelessly encumbered with tradition, but will feel, I am sure, that here is at last an initiative, most powerful and intense, which he must after this bear constantly in mind.

Poetry of the last few decades in England has occupied itself mainly with archaic or purely ideal subjects, with specialist experiments in psychology and morbid anatomy, or the familiar stock material of fantasy and sentiment. For these a certain art-glamour, so to speak,—a certain metrical remove,—is required as a rule, which can be best attained, perhaps, by the fine form and dainty colour of rhyming verse. And there will always, let us hope, be those who will continue to supply this artistic poetry, bringing as it does so much inestimable enhancement to the everyday life. Up to the present it may be that this poetry has fairly satisfied the need of the time,—a time occupied too much with its processes of material civilisation and wealth-acquirement to attend very truly to the ideal. But standing now on the verge of a new era—an era of democratic ascendancy—it may be well to ask ourselves, even in conservative England, whether, seeing the immense poetic need of a time dangerously possessed of new and tremendous forces, this poetry of archaic form and

sentiment is likely to be equal to the hour. We want now a poetry that shall be masterfully contemporary, of irresistible appeal to the hearts of the people ; and this we certainly have not in England to-day. The critic will say in reply at once, But look at Tennyson, look at Browning ! And he is right in insisting upon their great claim. But if we ask ourselves, What then is Tennyson's distinctive achievement in poetry ? we have to answer, *The Idylls of the King* : and Browning's ? *The Ring and the Book*. It does not need a prophet to see at once that there is no hope of poems like these,—masterpieces as both of them are in quite different ways—ever really reaching the people at all. So with their poetry throughout ; with all its human feeling and imagination, one feels that it is addressed chiefly to the cultured, to the audience of ease and refinement. While the wider audience of the people has been vastly increasing, it seems as if the poets had been turning away from it more and more since the time of Burns. It is a far cry from Burns,—even from Wordsworth,—to Tennyson and Browning.

It may seem that a dangerous comparison has been invited in these instances, but it is one that must be faced straightforwardly. The name of Burns suggests a solution of the whole matter. He at any rate sang out of an abounding sympathy with, and knowledge of, the popular needs of his day,—

“ Deep in the general heart of men
His power survives.”

In his songs he relied not only upon the great

elementary passions and sentiments of men for his inspiration, but also upon the natural idiom of speech and the music in vogue at his time. Of course we do not say, copy the method of Burns ; but we do say, copy his literary response to life, and his reliance upon contemporary idiom and tune. If it be asked now, as naturally it will, if in Walt Whitman we have a poet who has tried to do this, the answer is unmistakable. His poetry may not be powerful in "the general heart of men" yet, as were the songs of Burns in his time ; but we have to remember the incalculable enlargement of life since then, and the enormously increased difficulties of the task, especially, as before remarked, in the case of one who, like Walt Whitman, sets himself to cope with the whole universal, cosmic sweep of space and time. His is, therefore, as he has constantly affirmed, an initiative, rather than a consummation in poetry. "Poets to come !" he cries :—

"Poets to come ! orators, singers, musicians to come !
 Not to-day is to justify me and answer what I am for,
 But you, a new brood, native, athletic, continental, greater
 than before known,
 Arouse ! for you must justify me.

I myself but write one or two indicative words for the
 future,
 I but advance a moment only to wheel and hurry back in
 the darkness."

Of the virtue of his work as a final accomplishment in poetry, there would probably be no two English readers able to agree. What it is wished to lay

stress on here, is that, as he has been the first to attempt this great work, so his significance as a pioneer, as an initiator, is beyond all dispute. He is suggestive rather than complete ; but his suggestion is to the younger minds of to-day by far the greatest thing that is to be found in contemporary poetic movement.

Thinking on this suggestion, first of all from its purely literary side, we are brought face to face at once with problems of extreme difficulty, which have been suggestively treated by William Sloane Kennedy and other American writers recently, but which it will be rather attempted to roughly state than to solve here. The whole of Whitman's departure in poetry is concerned with the vexed question of prose and verse, and the proper functions of the two modes of expression. Absolutely stated, prose is the equivalent of *speech* in all its range ; verse, of *song*. But it is evident at once that the matter does not rest here. In a hundred ways needs arise which cannot be met by a strict adherence to this line of demarcation, as when, for instance, an elevation of utterance is required that yet does not, properly speaking, arise into pure song. In the right adjustment then of the relations betwixt prose and verse lies the difficult secret of the art of words. Whitman noting in his literary work the restricting effect of exact rhyme measures, sought to attain a new poetic mode by a return to the rhythmic movement of prose, with what signal result may be seen by a sympathetic dive almost anywhere into *Leaves of Grass*. It is a substitution, it is found at once, of harmony for melody ; of a larger, more

epic music for the old lyric movements of poetry. This tendency is indeed one of the time ; we find the same in music, as in Wagner, and his disciple Dvorák,—a tendency to advance further and further from tune towards complicate harmonic orchestral effects. And the advance is a great one beyond a doubt. The only danger is that in accepting this new tendency, we may neglect the great virtues of past modes. Always the salvation of all art-expression lies in the perfect adjustment of the new with the old. It is earnestly to be desired, therefore, that the “poets to come,” especially those of the immediate future, will be wise enough to see this, and, taking the initiative of Walt Whitman greatly to heart, yet have the high artistic sanity to eschew his mannerisms and incidental weaknesses, and follow only what is essential and supreme in his method, reconciling it intelligently with his noble teaching of the old masters of song. A newer, grander harmony it has been his to herald ; but we who come of Celtic stock feel that the older music, the old tunes of the heart, have still a great future, and that it is in the right adjustment of their simple music with the new that the success of poetry as a minister of life in the future will lie.

Thinking on Walt Whitman's initiative in the larger sense, and turning over the *Leaves of Grass* in a spirit of sympathetic response,—of response as if to a work of nature, rather than of art,—the consciousness of an intimate new seeing of things there thrills one through and through. It is not now the testament of the universal love for men

alone, which we laid stress upon earlier in these pages, but the utterly new poetic insight into the conditioning of human life and action. For though Walt Whitman's deliverance has been prepared for and preceded in philosophy, as in Hegel, for instance, to whom he unhesitatingly states his indebtedness, in poetry it is quite new. Ideas for long the sole property of the philosophical coteries, and moving within the close range of academic influence, are here set humanly free in song, emotionally related to the common life of men. With Whitman the emotional is all in all, and includes the intellectual, as it were ; and the reader who would understand his full significance must bring natural and noble feeling to the task. Given this, and his apparent confusions and violent paradoxes assume poetic order and stimulus. With Hegel, he is a mystic, in the profoundest sense ; but his mysticism is one that it does not require academic equipment to master,—it is the mysticism whose germs are to be found in the most ignorant being who, awaking at morning, sees that the sun is shining, and is unconsciously glad.

“ I am the poet of the Body, and I am the poet of the
Soul,
The pleasures of heaven are with me and the pains of
hell are with me,
The first I graft and increase upon myself, the latter I
translate into a new tongue.”

It is this new translation of the old sorrows and shames and degradations, and their redemption as parts of the divine order of human life, that many

critics have found so intolerable in *Leaves of Grass*; but let us rather be glad for so timely a deliverance from an old bondage. It is only a highest imagination that can so relate and ennoble things. The poets and so-called idealists in art have of recent times trusted to incidental and adventitious aids,—the aids of picturesque association, romance-interest, and so on, to give their subjects poetic relation; but Walt Whitman has essayed to rely upon the essential primary conditions of being and thought. From this resolute reliance upon the unalterable basis of the divine order he is able to face hopefully problems of this often seemingly so hopeless age, finding under all the tumult of misery and evil the celestial promise:

“ In this broad earth of ours,
Amid the measureless grossness and the slag,
Enclosed and safe within its central heart,
Nestles the seed perfection.”

This reliance enables him to speak with superb faith in its future of the Democracy that is so unsettling the old feudal relations, in art as well as in political and social life. And the poet whose apprehension has at once so wide a scientific extension, and such an emotional impulse, may well find his heart large enough to embrace life's illimitable multitudes. The idea of a great loving confederacy of men and women, united in the undying cause of Truth and Beauty, gives a most noble human appeal to many of his poems. “Come,” he cries,—

“Come, I will make the continent indissoluble,
I will make the most splendid race the sun ever shone
upon,
I will make divine magnetic lands,
With the love of comrades,
With the life-long love of comrades.

I will plant companionship thick as trees along all the
rivers of America, and along the shores of the great
lakes, and all over the prairies,
I will make inseparable cities with their arms about each
other's necks,
By the love of comrades,
By the manly love of comrades.”

Again :—

“I dream'd in a dream I saw a city invincible to the
attacks of the whole of the rest of the earth,
I dream'd that was the new city of Friends,
Nothing was greater there than the quality of robust
love, it led the rest,
It was seen every hour in the actions of the men of that
city,
And in all their looks and words.”

It is not possible here to go much into detail in speaking of the great wealth of poetry to be found in *Leaves of Grass*. Perhaps it is best for the uninitiated reader to begin with the “Inscriptions,” then turn to the section called “Calamus,” (Calamus being a sort of American grass which is used here to typify comradeship and love!) reading two or three poems there. Proceeding then, turn to the more simply tuneful summons of “Pioneers! O Pioneers!” in the “Birds of Passage” series, after which it would be an impertinence to direct further,

except perhaps to suggest a return to the beginning of the book to read "Starting from Paumanok," which is a sort of overture to Whitman's after music. By this time the reader's fate as far as Walt Whitman's influence is concerned will be decided. Either will have come the supreme joy of the approach to a new poet, or the tedium of an unappreciated book.

Many of Whitman's most characteristic poems have necessarily been omitted from a volume like the present, intended for an average popular English audience—an audience which, be it confessed, from the actual experiment of the present editor, is apt to find much of *Leaves of Grass* as unintelligible as *Sordello*, not without a certain excuse haply in some instances. The method of selection adopted in preparing the volume has certainly not been scientific or very profoundly critical. The limitations of the average run of readers have been, as far as they could be surmised, the limitations of the book, and upon the head of that unaccountable class, who have in the past been guilty of not a few poets' and prophets' maltreatment, rest any odium the thorough-paced disciple of Walt Whitman may attach to the present venture. For those who wish to thoroughly apprehend the *Leaves of Grass* it will be necessary, let it be said at once, to study them in their complete form, which is to be obtained in the edition of Messrs. Wilson & McCormick, of Glasgow; as also the indispensable *Specimen Days and Collect*, and the *Life* by Dr. Maurice Bucke, mentioned in these pages. The *Specimen Days* volume also contains the famous preface to the

first edition of *Leaves of Grass*; a very important commentary on the tendencies of the time, entitled *Democratic Vistas*; a suggestive essay, *Poetry To-Day in America*; and a lecture on Abraham Lincoln, delivered several times in the last few years in the United States. Dr. Bucke's *Life*, which is simply invaluable as a straightforwardly enthusiastic presentment of a great and heroic nature, contains, too, W. D. O'Connor's *Good Grey Poet*, and a valuable appendix of contemporary American notices; the Glasgow edition having a similar list of English ones compiled by Professor Dowden. In this English list the names of Ruskin, Tennyson, Swinburne, Buchanan, Symonds, and other leading poets and writers, bear unique testimony to Whitman's influence.

At last, in thinking on all that might have been said to aid the true apprehension of one of the few true books that have appeared in the present generation, these jottings of comment and suggestion seem, on looking over them, more or less futile and beside the mark. But it would be impossible for any writer, and especially for a young writer, to speak at all finally and absolutely in dealing with a nature so unprecedented and so powerful. All that he can hope to do is to suggest and facilitate the means of approach. Else there is a great temptation to dwell upon many matters left untouched, and specially to enlarge with enthusiasm on certain of the poetic qualities of the book. Of Whitman's felicitous power of words at his best; of his noble symphonic movement in such poems as the heroic funeral-song on President Lincoln,—

"When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd"—(part of which, be it remembered, has been set to music by one of our leading younger composers, C. Villiers Stanford); of his subtle translation of those glimpses of the hidden subtle essences of Nature that the artist finds so elusive and yet so insistent; of his original sense, too, of the inner and outer human aspects: it were a long, startlingly unconventional commentary that satisfactorily expressed these and a hundred things besides.

Apart from any mere literary qualities or excellences, what needs lastly to have all stress laid upon it, is the urgent, intimate, personal influence that Walt Whitman exerts upon those who approach him with sympathy and healthy feeling. There are very few books that have this fine appeal and stimulus; but once the personal magnetism of Walt Whitman has reached the heart, it will be found that his is a stimulus unlike any other in its natural power. His influence is peculiarly individual, and therefore, from his unique way of relating the individual to the universal, peculiarly organic and potent for moral elevation. Add to this, that he is passionately contemporary, dealing always with the ordinary surroundings, facing directly the apparently unbeautiful and unheroic phenomena of the everyday life, and not asking his readers away into some airy other-where of painful return, and it will be found that the new seeing he gives is of immediate and constant effect, making perpetually for love and manliness and natural life. With this seeing, indeed, the commonest things, the most trifling actions, become

transformed and idealised, so that a new dignity enters unawares by the very doorway of the commonplace, ennobling the faces and voices of those around with a divine promise, and making dishonour and unchivalry impossible.

It is the younger hearts who will thrill to this new incitement,—the younger natures, who are putting forth strenuously into the war of human liberation. Older men and women have established their mental and spiritual environment; they work according to their wont. They, many of them, look with something of derision at this sanguine devotion to new ideals, and haply utter smiling protests against the deceptive charms of all things novel. But if the ideals informing *Leaves of Grass* are in one sense very new, they are also very old,—as old as the world itself. And in the same way, although Walt Whitman is an innovator, he follows as naturally in the literary order as did Marlowe for instance, and after him, Shakespeare, in their day; and is as natively related to his time. The poet who derives in the Nineteenth Century from the Bible, and from Homer,—appreciating such later influences as Carlyle's in letters, Hegel's in philosophy, J. F. Millet's in art, and Wagner's in music, is not blind to the great teaching of the past; and if to this he brings a later seeing all his own, we who are young may well respond to him, too, in turn, and advance fearlessly in the lines of his unique initiative. To the younger hearts and minds, then, be these *Leaves of Grass*, gathered and interwoven as the emblem of a corresponding fellowship of men and women, dedicate!

"The prairie-grass dividing, its special odour breathing,
I demand of it the spiritual corresponding,
Demand the copious and close companionship of men."

The natural life, informed with virile religious love,—the spirit of comradeship, as opposed to the antagonism of class with class, and nation with nation, which has stirred men selfishly and cruelly so long: this were the salvation, cries Walt Whitman, of the new Democracy, inevitably now at hand. And with his tones of heroic incitement and earnest remonstrance ringing in our midst, we who are young may do much in the stress and tumult of the advance to a new and endangered era for the high order of love and truth and liberty, for the divine cause of all heroes and poets.

"Years of the modern! years of the unperform'd!
Your horizon rises, I see it parting away for more
 august dramas,
I see not America only, not only Liberty's nation, but
 other nations preparing,
I see tremendous entrances and exits, new combinations,
 the solidarity of races,
I see that force advancing with irresistible power on the
 world's stage.

Your dream. O years, how they penetrate through me!
 (I know not whether I sleep or wake;)
The perform'd America and Europe grow dim, retiring
 in shadow behind me,
The unperform'd, more gigantic then ever, advance,
 advance upon me."

ERNEST RHYS.

CHELSEA, 1886.



Leaves of Grass.





Leaves of Grass.

INSCRIPTIONS.

TO FOREIGN LANDS.

I HEAR 'd for something to prove this
And orld,
Th at her athletic Democracy,
 my poems that you behold in them

THEE OLD CAUSE.

To thee old cause!
Thou peerless, passionate, good cause,
Thou stern, remorseless, sweet idea,
Deathless throughout the ages, races, lands,
After a strange sad war, great war for thee,
(I think all war through time was really fought, and
ever will be really fought, for thee,)
These chants for thee, the eternal march of thee.

(A war O soldiers not for itself alone,
Far, far more stood silently waiting behind, now to
advance in this book.)

Thou orb of many orbs !
Thou seething principle ! thou well-kept, latent germ !
thou centre !
Around the idea of thee the war revolving,
With all its angry and vehement play of causes,
(With vast results to come for thrice a thousand years,)
These recitatives for thee,—my book and the war are
one,
Merged in its spirit I and mine, as the contest hinged
on thee,
As a wheel on its axis turns, this book unwitting to
itself,
Around the idea of thee.

ONE'S-SELF I SING.

ONE'S-SELF I sing, a simple separate person,
Yet utter the world Democratic, the word En-Masse.

Of physiology from top to toe I sing,
Not physiognomy alone nor brain alone is worthy for
the Muse, I say the Form complete is worthier far,
The Female equally with the Male I sing.

Of Life immense in passion, pulse, and power,
Cheerful, for freest action form'd under the laws divine,
The Modern Man I sing.

AS I PONDER'D IN SILENCE.

As I ponder'd in silence,
Returning upon my poems, considering, lingering long,
A Phantom arose before me with distrustful aspect,
Terrible in beauty, age, and power,
The genius of poets of old lands,
As to me directing like flame its eyes,
With finger pointing to many immortal songs,
And menacing voice, *What singest thou?* it said,
Know'st thou not there is but one theme for ever-enduring
bards?
And that is the theme of War, the fortune of battles,
The making of perfect soldiers.
Be it so, then I answer'd,
I too haughty Shade also sing war, and a longer and
greater one than any,
Waged in my book with varying fortune, with flight,
advance and retreat, victory deferr'd and wavering,
(Yet methinks certain, or as good as certain, at the last,)
the field the world,
For life and death, for the Body and for the eternal Soul,
Lo, I too am come, chanting the chant of battles,
I above all promote brave soldiers.

IN CABIN'D SHIPS AT SEA.

IN cabin'd ships at sea,
The boundless blue on every side expanding,
With whistling winds and music of the waves, the large
imperious waves,
Or some lone bark buoy'd on the dense marine,

Where joyous full of faith, spreading white sails,
She cleaves the ether mid the sparkle and the foam of
day, or under many a star at night,
By sailors young and old haply will I, a reminiscence of
the land, be read,
In full rapport at last.

*Here are our thoughts, voyagers' thoughts,
Here not the land, firm land alone appears, may then
by them be said,
The sky o'erarches here, we feel the undulating deck
beneath our feet,
We feel the long pulsation, ebb and flow of endless
motion,
The tones of unseen mystery, the vague and vast sug-
gestions of the briny world, the liquid-flowing
syllables,
The perfume, the faint creaking of the cordage, the
melancholy rhythm,
The boundless vista and the horizon far and dim are all
here,
And this is ocean's poem.*

Then falter not O book, fulfil your destiny,
You not a reminiscence of the land alone,
You too as a lone bark cleaving the ether, purpos'd I
know not whither, yet ever full of faith,
Consort to every ship that sails, sail you !
Bear forth to them folded my love, (dear mariners, for
you I fold it here in every leaf ;)
Speed on my book ! spread your white sails my little
bark athwart the imperious waves,
Chant on, sail on, bear o'er the boundless blue from me
to every sea,
This song for mariners and all their ships.

TO A HISTORIAN.

You who celebrate bygones,
 Who have explored the outward, the surfaces of the
 races, the life that has exhibited itself,
 Who have treated of man as the creature of politics,
 aggregates, rulers and priests,
 I, habitan of the Alleghanies, treating of him as he is in
 himself in his own rights,
 Pressing the pulse of the life that has seldom exhibited
 itself, (the great pride of man in himself,)
 Chanter of Personality, outlining what is yet to be,
 I project the history of the future.

WHEN I READ THE BOOK.

WHEN I read the book, the biography famous,
 And is this then (said I) what the author calls a man's
 life? [my life?
 And so will some one when I am dead and gone write
 (As if any man really knew aught of my life,
 Why even I myself I often think know little or nothing
 of my real life,
 Only a few hints, a few diffused faint clews and
 indirections
 I seek for my own use to trace out here.)

BEGINNING MY STUDIES.

BEGINNING my studies the first step pleas'd me so much,
 The mere fact consciousness, these forms, the power of
 motion,

The least insect or animal, the senses, eyesight, love,
The first step I saw awed me and pleas'd me so much,
I have hardly gone and hardly wish'd to go any farther,
But stop and loiter all the time to sing it in ecstatic
songs.

BEGINNERS.

How they are provided for upon the earth (appearing at
intervals,)
How dear and dreadful they are to the earth,
How they inure to themselves as much as to any—what
a paradox appears their age,
How people respond to them, yet know them not,
How there is something relentless in their fate all times,
How all times mischoose the objects of their adulation
and reward,
And how the same inexorable price must still be paid for
the same great purchase.

ME IMPERTURBE.

ME imperturbe, standing at ease in Nature,
Master of all or mistress of all, aplomb in the midst of
irrational things,
Imbued as they, passive, receptive, silent as they,
Finding my occupation, poverty, notoriety, foibles,
crimes, less important than I thought,
Me toward the Mexican sea, or in the Mannahatta or
the Tennessee, or far north or inland,

A river man, or a man of the woods or of any farm-life
of these States or of the coast, or the lakes or
Kanada,
Me wherever my life is lived, O to be self-balanced for
contingencies,
To confront night, storms, hunger, ridicule, accidents,
rebuffs, as the trees and animals do.

THE SHIP STARTING.

Lo, the unbounded sea,
On its breast a ship starting, spreading all sails, carrying
even her moonsails,
The pennant is flying aloft as she speeds she speeds so
stately—below emulous waves press forward,
They surround the ship with shining curving motions
and foam.

I HEAR AMERICA SINGING.

I HEAR America singing, the varied carols I hear,
Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be
blythe and strong,
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or
beam,
The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or
leaves off work,
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat,
the deck-hand singing on the steamboat deck,
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the
hatter singing as he stands,

The wood-cutter's song, the ploughboy's on his way in
the morning, or at noon intermission or at sundown,
The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young
wife at work, or of the girl sewing or washing,
Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none
else,
The day what belongs to the day—at night the party of
young fellows, robust, friendly,
Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

WHAT PLACE IS BESIEGED ?

WHAT place is besieged, and vainly tries to raise the
siege ?
Lo, I send to that place a commander, swift, brave,
immortal,
And with him horse and foot, and parks of artillery,
And artillery-men, the deadliest that ever fired gun.

STILL THOUGH THE ONE I SING.

STILL though the one I sing,
(One, yet of contradictions made,) I dedicate to
Nationality,
I leave in him revolt, (O latent right of insurrection ! O
quenchless, indispensable fire !)

SHUT NOT YOUR DOORS.

SHUT not your doors to me proud libraries,
For that which was lacking on all your well-fill'd
shelves, yet needed most, I bring,
Forth from the war emerging, a book I have made,
The words of my book nothing, the drift of it every
thing,
A book separate, not link'd with the rest nor felt by the
intellect,
But you ye untold latencies will thrill to every page.

POETS TO COME.

POETS to come ! orators, singers, musicians to come !
Not to-day is to justify me and answer what I am for,
But you, a new brood, native, athletic, continental,
greater than before known,
Arouse ! for you must justify me.

I myself but write one or two indicative words for the
future,
I but advance a moment only to wheel and hurry back
in the darkness.

I am a man who, sauntering along without fully stopping,
turns a casual look upon you and then averts his
face,
Leaving it to you to prove and define it,
Expecting the main things from you.

TO YOU.

STRANGER, if you passing meet me and desire to speak
to me, why should you not speak to me ?
And why should I not speak to you ?

THOU READER.

THOU reader throbbest life and pride and love the same
as I,
Therefore for thee the following chants.





STARTING FROM PAUMANOK.

1.

STARTING from fish-shape Paumanok where I was born,
Well-begotten, and rais'd by a perfect mother,
After roaming many lands, lover of populous pavements,
Dweller in Mannahatta my city, or on southern savannas,
Or a soldier camp'd or carrying my knapsack and gun,
 or a miner in California,
Or rude in my home in Dakota's woods, my diet meat,
 my drink from the spring,
Or withdrawn to muse and meditate in some deep
 recess,
Far from the clank of crowds intervals passing rapt and
 happy,
Aware of the fresh free giver the flowing Missouri, aware
 of mighty Niagara,
Aware of the buffalo herds grazing the plains, the hirsute
 and strong-breasted bull,
Of earth, rocks, Fifth-month flowers experienced, stars,
 rain, snow, my amaze,
Having studied the mocking-bird's tones and the flight
 of the mountain-hawk,
And heard at dusk the unrivall'd one, the hermit thrush
 from the swamp-cedars,
Solitary, singing in the West, I strike up for a New
 World.

2.

Victory, union, faith, identity, time,
The indissoluble compacts, riches, mystery,
Eternal progress, the kosmos, and the modern reports.

This then is life,
Here is what has come to the surface after so many throes
and convulsions.

How curious ! how real !
Underfoot the divine soil, overhead the sun.

See revolving the globe,
The ancestor-continents away group'd together,
The present and future continents north and south, with
the isthmus between.

See, vast trackless spaces,
As in a dream they change, they swiftly fill,
Countless masses debouch upon them,
They are now cover'd with the foremost people, arts,
institutions, known.

See, projected through time,
For me an audience interminable.

With firm and regular step they wend, they never stop,
Successions of men, Americanos, a hundred millions,
One generation playing its part and passing on,
Another generation playing its part and passing on in its
turn,
With faces turn'd sideways or backward towards me to
listen,
With eyes retrospective towards me.

3.

Americanos ! conquerors ! marches humanitarian !
Foremost ! century marches ! Libertad ! masses !
For you a programme of chants.

Chants of the prairies,
Chants of the long-running Mississippi, and down to the
Mexican sea,
Chants of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and
Minnesota,
Chants going forth from the centre from Kansas, and
thence equidistant,
Shooting in pulses of fire ceaseless to vivify all.

4.

Take my leaves America, take them South and take
them North,
Make welcome for them everywhere, for they are your
own offspring,
Surround them East and West, for they would surround
you,
And you precedents, connect lovingly with them, for
they connect lovingly with you.

I conn'd old times,
I sat studying at the feet of the great masters,
Now if eligible O that the great masters might return
and study me.

In the name of these States shall I scorn the antique ?
Why these are the children of the antique to justify it.

5.

Dead poets, philosophers, priests,
Martyrs, artists, inventors, governments long since,
Language-shapers on other shores,
Nations once powerful, now reduced, withdrawn, or
desolate,
I dare not proceed till I respectfully credit what you
have left wafted hither,
I have perused it, own it is admirable, (moving awhile
among it,)
Think nothing can ever be greater, nothing can ever
deserve more than it deserves,
Regarding it all intently a long while, then dismissing it,
I stand in my place with my own day here.

Here lands female and male,
Here the heir-ship and heiress-ship of the world, here
the flame of materials,
Here spirituality the translatress, the openly-avow'd,
The ever-tending, the finale of visible forms,
The satisfier, after due long-waiting now advancing,
Yes here comes my mistress the soul.

6.

The soul,
Forever and forever—longer than soil is brown and
solid—longer than water ebbs and flows.

I will make the poems of materials, for I think they are
to be the most spiritual poems,
And I will make the poems of my body and of mortality,
For I think I shall then supply myself with the poems
of my soul and of immortality.

I will make a song for these States that no one State
may under any circumstances be subjected to
another State,

And I will make a song that there shall be comity by
day and by night between all the States, and
between any two of them,

And I will make a song for the ears of the President,
full of weapons with menacing points,

And behind the weapons countless dissatisfied faces ;

And a song make I of the One form'd out of all,

The fang'd and glittering One whose head is over all,

Resolute warlike One including and over all

(However high the head of any else that head is over all.)

I will acknowledge contemporary lands,

I will trail the whole geography of the globe and salute
courteously every city large and small,

And employments ! I will put in my poems that with
you is heroism upon land and sea,

And I will report all heroism from an American point of
view.

I will sing the song of companionship,

I will show what alone must finally compact these,

I believe these are to found their own ideal of manly
love, indicating it in me,

I will therefore let flame from me the burning fires that
were threatening to consume me,

I will lift what has too long kept down those smoulder-
ing fires,

I will give them complete abandonment,

I will write the evangel-poem of comrades and of love,

For who but I should understand love with all its
sorrow and joy ?

And who but I should be the poet of comrades ?

7.

I am the credulous man of qualities, ages, races,
I advance from the people in their own spirit,
Here is what sings unrestricted faith.

Omnes ! omnes ! let others ignore what they may,
I make the poem of evil also, I commemorate that part
also,
I am myself just as much evil as good, and my nation
is—and I say there is in fact no evil,
(Or if there is I say it is just as important to you, to the
land or to me, as any thing else.)

I too, following many and follow'd by many, inaugurate
a religion, I descend into the arena,
(It may be I am destin'd to utter the loudest cries
there, the winner's pealing shouts,
Who knows ? they may rise from me yet, and soar above
every thing.)

Each is not for its own sake,
I say the whole earth and all the stars in the sky are for
religion's sake.

I say no man has ever yet been half devout enough,
None has ever yet adored or worship'd half enough,
None has begun to think how divine he himself is, and
how certain the future is.

I say that the real and permanent grandeur of these
States must be their religion,
Otherwise there is no real and permanent grandeur,
(Nor character nor life worthy the name without religion,
Nor land nor man or woman without religion).

8.

What are you doing young man ?
Are you so earnest, so given up to literature, science, art,
amours ?
These ostensible realities, politics, points ?
Your ambition or business whatever it may be ?

It is well—against such I say not a word, I am their
poet also,
But behold ! such swiftly subside, burnt up for religion's
sake,
For not all matter is fuel to heat, impalpable flame, the
essential life of the earth,
Any more than such are to religion.

9.

What do you seek so pensive and silent ?
What do you need camerado ?
Dear son do you think it is love ?

Listen dear son—listen America, daughter or son,
It is a painful thing to love a man or woman to excess,
and yet it satisfies, it is great,
But there is something else very great, it makes the
whole coincide,
It, magnificent, beyond materials, with continuous hands
sweeps and provides for all.

10.

Know you, solely to drop in the earth the germs of a
greater religion,
The following chants each for its kind I sing.

My comrade !

For you to share with me two greatnesses, and a third
one rising inclusive and more resplendent,
The greatness of Love and Democracy, and the greatness
of Religion.

Melange mine own, the unseen and the seen,
Mysterious ocean where the streams empty,
Prophetic spirit of materials shifting and flickering
around me,
Living beings, identities now doubtless near us in the
air that we know not of,
Contact daily and hourly that will not release me,
These selecting, these in hints demanded of me.

Not he with a daily kiss onward from childhood kissing
me,
Has winded and twisted around me that which holds me
to him,
Any more than I am held to the heavens and all the
spiritual world,
After what they have done to me, suggesting themes.

O such themes—equalities ! O divine average !
Warblings under the sun, usher'd as now, or at noon, or
setting,
Strains musical flowing through ages, now reaching
hither,
I take to your reckless and composite chords, add to
them, and cheerfully pass them forward.

11.

As I have walk'd in Alabama my morning walk,
I have seen where the she-bird the mocking-bird sat on
her nest in the briars hatching her brood.

I have seen the he-bird also,
I have paus'd to hear him near at hand inflating his
throat and joyfully singing.

And while I paus'd it came to me that what he really
sang for was not there only,
Nor for his mate nor himself only, nor all sent back by
the echoes,
But subtle, clandestine, away beyond,
A charge transmitted and gift occult for those being
born.

12.

Democracy ! near at hand to you a throat is now inflating
itself and joyfully singing.

Ma femme ! for the brood beyond us and of us,
For those who belong here and those to come,
I exultant to be ready for them will now shake out carols
stronger and haughtier than have ever yet been
heard upon earth.

I will make the songs of passion to give them their way,
And your songs outlaw'd offenders, for I scan you with
kindred eyes, and carry you with me the same as
any.

I will make the true poem of riches,
To earn for the body and the mind whatever adheres
and goes forward and is not dropt by death ;
I will effuse egotism and show it underlying all, and I
will be the bard of personality,
And I will show of male and female that either is but
the equal of the other,

And sexual organs and acts ! do you concentrate in me,
for I am determin'd to tell you with courageous
clear voice to prove you illustrious.
And I will show that there is no imperfection in the
present, and can be none in the future,
And I will show that whatever happens to anybody it
may be turn'd to beautiful results,
And I will show that nothing can happen more beautiful
than death,
And I will thread a thread through my poems that time
and events are compact,
And that all the things of the universe are miracles,
each as profound as any.

I will not make poems with reference to parts,
But I will make poems, songs, thoughts, with reference
to ensemble,
And I will not sing with reference to a day, but with
reference to all days,
And I will not make a poem nor the least part of a poem
but has reference to the soul,
Because having look'd at the objects of the universe, I
find there is no one nor any particle of one but has
reference to the soul.

13.

Was somebody asking to see the soul ?
See, your own shape and countenance, persons, sub-
stances, beasts, the trees, the running rivers, the
rocks and sands.

All hold spiritual joys and afterwards loosen them ;
How can the real body ever die and be buried ?

Of your real body and any man's or woman's real body,
Item for item it will elude the hands of the corpse-
cleaners and pass to fitting spheres,
Carrying what has accrued to it from the moment of
birth to the moment of death.

Not the types set up by the printer return their im-
pression, the meaning, the main concern,
Any more than a man's substance and life or a woman's
substance and life return in the body and the soul,
Indifferently before death and after death.

Behold, the body includes and is the meaning, the main
concern, and includes and is the soul ;
Whoever you are, how superb and how divine is your
body, or any part of it !

14

Whoever you are, to you endless announcements !

Daughter of the lands did you wait for your poet ?
Did you wait for one with a flowing mouth and indica-
tive hand ?

Toward the male of the States, and toward the female
of the States,
Exulting words, words to Democracy's lands.

Interlink'd, food-yielding lands !
Land of coal and iron ! land of gold ! land of cotton,
sugar, rice !
Land of wheat, beef, pork ! land of wool and hemp ! land
of the apple and the grape !
Land of the pastoral plains, the grass-fields of the world !
land of those sweet-air'd interminable plateaus !

Land of the herd, the garden, the healthy house of
adobie !

Lands where the north-west Columbia winds, and where
the south-west Colorado winds !

Land of the eastern Chesapeake ! land of the Delaware !

Land of Ontario, Erie, Huron, Michigan !

Land of the Old Thirteen ! Massachusetts land ! land of
Vermont and Connecticut !

Land of the ocean shores ! land of sierras and peaks !

Land of boatmen and sailors ! fishermen's land !

Inextricable lands ! the clutch'd together ! the pas-
sionate ones !

The side by side ! the elder and younger brothers ! the
bony-limb'd !

The great women's land ! the feminine ! the experienced
sisters and the inexperienced sisters !

Far breath'd land ! Arctic braced ! Mexican breez'd !
the diverse ! the compact !

The Pennsylvanian ! the Virginian ! the double Carol-
inian !

O all and each well-loved by me ! my intrepid nations !

O I at any rate include you all with perfect love !

I cannot be discharged from you ! not from one any
sooner than another !

O death ! O for all that, I am yet of you unseen this
hour with irrepressible love,

Walking New England, a friend, a traveller,

Splashing my bare feet in the edge of the summer
ripples on Paumanok's sands,

Crossing the prairies, dwelling again in Chicago, dwell-
ing in every town,

Observing shows, births, improvements, structures, arts,
Listening to orators and oratresses in public halls,

Of and through the States as during life, each man and
woman my neighbour,

The Louisianian, the Georgian, as near to me, and I as
near to him and her,
The Mississippian and Arkansian yet with me, and I yet
with any of them,
Yet upon the plains west of the spinal river, yet in my
house of adobie,
Yet returning eastward, yet in the Seaside State or in
Maryland,
Yet Kanadian cheerily braving the winter, the snow and
ice welcome to me,
Yet a true son either of Maine or of the Granite State, or
the Narragansett Bay State, or the Empire State,
Yet sailing to other shores to annex the same, yet
welcoming every new brother,
Hereby applying these leaves to the new ones from the
hour they unite with the old ones,
Coming among the new ones myself to be their com-
panion and equal, coming personally to you now,
Enjoining you to acts, characters, spectacles, with me.

15.

With me with firm holding, yet haste, haste on.

For your life adhere to me,
(I may have to be persuaded many times before I con-
sent to give myself really to you, but what of that?
Must not Nature be persuaded many times ?)

No dainty dolce affettuoso I,
Bearded, sun-burnt, grey-neck'd, forbidding, I have
arrived,
To be wrestled with as I pass for the solid prizes of the
universe,
For such I afford whoever can persevere to win them.

16.

On my way a moment I pause,
 Here for you ! and here for America !
 Still the present I raise aloft, still the future of the States
 I harbinge glad and sublime,
 And for the past I pronounce what the air holds of the
 red aborigines.

The red aborigines,
 Leaving natural breaths, sounds of rain and winds, calls
 as of birds and animals in the woods, syllabled to
 us for names,
 Okonee, Koosa, Ottawa, Monongahela, Sauk, Natchez,
 Chattahoochee, Kaqueta, Oronoco, [Walla,
 Wabash, Miami, Saginaw, Chippewa, Oshkosh, Walla-
 Leaving such to the States they melt, they depart,
 charging the water and the land with names.

17.

Expanding and swift, henceforth,
 Elements, breeds, adjustments, turbulent, quick, and
 audacious, [branching,
 A world primal again, vistas of glory incessant, and
 A new race dominating previous ones and grander far,
 with new contests,
 New politics, new literatures and religions, new inven-
 tions and arts.

These, my voice announcing—I will sleep no more but
 arise,
 You oceans that have been calm within me ! how I feel
 you, fathomless, stirring, preparing unprecedented
 waves and storms.

13.

- See, steamers steaming through my poems,
See, in my poems immigrants continually coming and
landing.
See, in arriere, the wigwam, the trail, the hunter's hut,
the flat-boat, the maize-leaf, the claim, the rude
fence, and the backwoods village,
See, on the one side the Western Sea and on the other
the Eastern Sea, how they advance and retreat upon
my poems as upon their own shores,
See, pastures and forests in my poems—see, animals wild
and tame—see, beyond the Kaw, countless herds of
buffalo feeding on short curly grass,
See, in my poems, cities, solid, vast, inland, with paved
streets, with iron and stone edifices, ceaseless
vehicles, and commerce,
See, the many-cylinder'd steam printing-press—see, the
electric telegraph stretching across the continent,
See, through Atlantica's depths pulses American Europe
reaching, pulses of Europe duly return'd,
See, the strong and quick locomotive as it departs,
panting, blowing the steam-whistle,
See, ploughmen ploughing farms—see, miners digging
mines—see, the numberless factories,
See, mechanics busy at their benches with tools—see
from among them superior judges, philosophers,
Presidents, emerge, drest in working dresses,
See, lounging through the shops and fields of the States,
me well-belov'd, close-held by day and night,
Hear the loud echoes of my songs there—read the hints
come at last.

19.

O camerado close ! O you and me at last, and us two
only.

O a word to clear one's path ahead endlessly !

O something ecstatic and undemonstrable ! O music wild !

O now I triumph—and you shall also ;

O hand in hand—O wholesome pleasure—O one more
desirer and lover !

O to haste firm holding—to haste, haste on with me.





CALAMUS.

IN PATHS UNTRODDEN.

IN paths untrodden,
In the growth by margins of pond-waters,
Escaped from the life that exhibits itself,
From all the standards hitherto publish'd, from the
pleasures, profits, conformities,
Which too long I was offering to feed my soul,
Clear to me now standards not yet publish'd, clear to
me that my soul,
That the soul of the man I speak for rejoices in comrades,
Here by myself away from the clank of the world,
Tallying and talk'd to here by tongues aromatic,
No longer abash'd, (for in this secluded spot I can
respond as I would not dare elsewhere,)
Strong upon me the life that does not exhibit itself, yet
contains all the rest,
Resolv'd to sing no songs to-day but those of manly
attachment,
Projecting them along that substantial life,
Bequeathing hence types of athletic love,
Afternoon this delicious Ninth-month in my forty-first
year,

I proceed for all who are or have been young men,
To tell the secret of my nights and days,
To celebrate the need of comrades.

FOR YOU O DEMOCRACY.

COME, I will make the continent indissoluble,
I will make the most splendid race the sun ever shone
upon,
I will make divine magnetic lands,
With the love of comrades,
With the life-long love of comrades.

I will plant companionship thick as trees along all the
rivers of America, and along the shores of the great
lakes, and all over the prairies,
I will make inseparable cities with their arms about each
other's necks,
By the love of comrades,
By the manly love of comrades.

For you these from me, O Democracy, to serve you ma
femme !
For you, for you I am trilling these songs.

THESE I SINGING IN SPRING.

THESE I singing in spring collect for lovers,
(For who but I should understand lovers and all their
sorrow and joy ?

And who but I should be the poet of comrades ?)
 Collecting I traverse the garden the world, but soon I
 pass the gates,
 Now along the pond-side, now wading in a little, fearing
 not the wet,
 Now by the post-and-rail fences where the old stones
 thrown there, pick'd from the fields, have accumu-
 lated,
 (Wild flowers and vines and weeds come up through the
 stones and partly cover them, beyond these I pass,)
 Far, far in the forest, or sauntering later in summer,
 before I think where I go,
 Solitary, smelling the earthy smell, stopping now and
 then in the silence,
 Alone I had thought, yet soon a troop gathers around me,
 Some walk by my side and some behind, and some
 embrace my arms or neck,
 They the spirits of dear friends dead or alive, thicker
 they come, a great crowd, and I in the middle,
 Collecting, dispensing, singing, there I wander with
 them, [is near me,
 Plucking something for tokens, tossing toward whoever
 Here, lilac, with a branch of pine,
 Here, out of my pocket, some moss which I pull'd off a
 live-oak in Florida as it hung trailing down,
 Here, some pinks and laurel leaves, and a handful of
 sage,
 And here what I now draw from the water, wading in
 the pond-side,
 (O here I last saw him that tenderly loves me, and
 returns again never to separate from me,
 And this, O this shall henceforth be the token of com-
 rades, this calamus-root shall,
 Interchange it youths with each other ! let none render
 it back !)

And twigs of maple and a bunch of wild orange and
chestnut,
And stems of currants and plum-blows, and the aromatic
cedar,
These I compass'd around by a thick cloud of spirits,
Wandering, point to or touch as I pass, or throw them
loosely from me,
Indicating to each one what he shall have, giving some-
thing to each ;
But what I drew from the water by the pond-side, that
I reserve,
I will give of it, but only to them that love as I myself
am capable of loving.

OF THE TERRIBLE DOUBT OF APPEARANCES.

Of the terrible doubt of appearances,
Of the uncertainty after all, that we may be deluded,
That may-be reliance and hope are but speculations after
all,
That may-be identity beyond the grave is a beautiful
fable only,
May-be the things I perceive, the animals, plants, men,
hills, shining and flowing waters,
The skies of day and night, colours, densities, forms,
may-be these are (as doubtless they are) only
apparitions, and the real something has yet to be
known,
(How often they dart out of themselves as if to confound
me and mock me !
How often I think neither I know, nor any man knows,
ought of them.)

May-be seeming to me what they are (as doubtless they indeed but seem) as from my present point of view, and might prove (as of course they would) nought of what they appear, or nought anyhow, from entirely changed points of view ;
 To me these and the like of these are curiously answer'd by my lovers my dear friends,
 When he in whom I love travels with me or sits a long while holding me by the hand,
 When the subtle air, the impalpable, the sense that words and reason hold not, surround us and pervade us,
 Then I am charged with untold and untellable wisdom, I am silent, I require nothing further,
 I cannot answer the question of appearances or that of identity beyond the grave,
 But I walk or sit indifferent, I am satisfied,
 He ahold of my hand has completely satisfied me.

THE BASE OF ALL METAPHYSICS.

AND now gentlemen,
 A word I give to remain in your memories and minds,
 As base and finale too for all metaphysics.
 (So to the students the old professor,
 At the close of his crowded course.)
 Having studied the new and antique, the Greek and Germanic systems, [and Hegel,
 Kant having studied and stated, Fichte and Schelling
 Stated the lore of Plato, and Socrates greater than Plato,
 And greater than Socrates sought and stated, Christ
 divine having studied long,

I see reminiscent to-day those Greek and Germanic
 . systems, [see,
 See the philosophies all, Christian churches and tenets
 Yet underneath Socrates clearly see, and underneath
 Christ the divine I see,
 The dear love of man for his comrade, the attraction of
 friend to friend, [parents,
 Of the well-married husband and wife, of children and
 Of city for city and land for land.

RECORDERS AGES HENCE.

RECORDERS ages hence,
 Come, I will take you down underneath this impassive
 exterior, I will tell you what to say of me,
 Publish my name and hang up my picture as that of the
 tenderest lover,
 The friend the lover's portrait, of whom his friend his
 lover was fondest,
 Who was not proud of his songs, but of the measureless
 ocean of love within him, and freely pour'd it forth,
 Who often walk'd lonesome walks thinking of his dear
 friends, his lovers,
 Who pensive away from one he lov'd often lay sleepless
 and dissatisfied at night,
 Who knew too well the sick, sick dread lest the one he
 lov'd might secretly be indifferent to him,
 Whose happiest days were far away through fields, in
 woods, on hills, he and another wandering hand in
 hand, they twain apart from other men,
 Who oft as he saunter'd the streets curv'd with his arm
 the shoulder of his friend, while the arm of his
 friend rested upon him also.

WHEN I HEARD AT THE CLOSE OF THE DAY.

WHEN I heard at the close of the day how my name had
 been receiv'd with plaudits in the capitol, still it
 was not a happy night for me that follow'd,
 And else when I carous'd, or when my plans were accom-
 plish'd, still I was not happy,
 But the day when I rose at dawn from the bed of perfect
 health, refresh'd, singing, inhaling the ripe breath
 of autumn,
 When I saw the full moon in the west grow pale and
 disappear in the morning light,
 When I wander'd alone over the beach, and undressing
 bathed, laughing with the cool waters, and saw the
 sun rise,
 And when I thought how my dear friend my lover was
 on his way coming, O then I was happy,
 O then each breath tasted sweeter, and all that day my
 food nourish'd me more, and the beautiful day
 pass'd well,
 And the next came with equal joy, and with the next at
 evening came my friend,
 And that night while all was still I heard the waters
 roll slowly continually up the shores,
 I heard the hissing rustle of the liquid and sands as
 directed to me whispering to congratulate me,
 For the one I love most lay sleeping by me under the
 same cover in the cool night,
 In the stillness in the autumn moonbeams his face was
 inclined toward me,
 And his arm lay lightly around my breast—and that
 night I was happy.

ARE YOU THE NEW PERSON DRAWN
TOWARD ME?

ARE you the new person drawn toward me ?
To begin with take warning, I am surely far different
from what you suppose ;
Do you suppose you will find in me your ideal ?
Do you think it so easy to have me become your lover ?
Do you think the friendship of me would be unalloy'd
satisfaction ?
Do you think I am trusty and faithful ?
Do you see no further than this façade, this smooth and
tolerant manner of me ?
Do you suppose yourself advancing on real ground
toward a real heroic man ?
Have you no thought O dreamer that it may be all
naya, illusion ?

ROOTS AND LEAVES THEMSELVES ALONE.

Roots and leaves themselves alone are these,
Scents brought to men and women from the wild woods
and pond-side,
Breast-sorrel and pinks of love, fingers that wind around
tighter than vines,
Gushes from the throats of birds hid in the foliage of
trees as the sun is risen,
Breezes of land and love set from living shores to you on
the living sea, to you, O sailors !
Frost-mellow'd berries and Third-month twigs offer'd
fresh to young persons wandering out in the fields
when the winter breaks up,

Love-buds put before you and within you whoever you
are,
Buds to be unfolded on the old terms,
If you bring the warmth of the sun to them they will
open and bring form, colour, perfume, to you,
If you become the aliment and the wet they will become
flowers, fruits, tall branches and trees.

I SAW IN LOUISIANA A LIVE-OAK GROWING.

I saw in Louisiana a live-oak growing,
All alone stood it and the moss hung down from the
branches,
Without any companion it grew there uttering joyous
leaves of dark green,
And its look, rude, unbending, lusty, made me think of
myself,
But I wonder'd how it could utter joyous leaves standing
alone there without its friend near, for I know I
could not,
And I broke off a twig with a certain number of leaves
upon it, and twined around it a little moss,
And brought it away, and I have placed it in sight in
my room,
It is not needed to remind me as of my own dear friends,
(For I believe lately I think of little else than of them,)
Yet it remains to me a curious token, it makes me think
of manly love ;
For all that, and though the live-oak glistens there in
Louisiana solitary in a wide flat space,
Uttering joyous leaves all its life without a friend a lover
near,
I know very well I could not.

TO A STRANGER.

PASSING stranger ! you do not know how longingly I
look upon you,
You must be he I was seeking, or she I was seeking, (it
comes to me as of a dream,)
I have somewhere lived a life of joy with you,
All is recall'd as we flit by each other, fluid, affectionate,
chaste, matured, [me,
You grew up with me, were a boy with me or a girl with
I ate with you and slept with you, your body has become
not yours only nor left my body mine only,
You give me the pleasure of your eyes, face, flesh, as we
pass, you take of my beard, breast, hands, in return,
I am not to speak to you, I am to think of you when I
sit alone or wake at night alone,
I am to wait, I do not doubt I am to meet you again,
I am to see to it that I do not lose you.

THIS MOMENT YEARNING AND THOUGHTFUL.

THIS moment yearning and thoughtful sitting alone,
It seems to me there are other men in other lands
yearning and thoughtful,
It seems to me I can look over and behold them in
Germany, Italy, France, Spain,
Or far, far away, in China, or in Russia or Japan,
talking other dialects,
And it seems to me if I could know those men I should
become attached to them as I do to men in my own
lands,
O I know we should be brethren and lovers,
I know I should be happy with them.

I HEAR IT WAS CHARGED AGAINST ME.

I HEAR it was charged against me that I sought to
 destroy institutions,
 But really I am neither for nor against institutions,
 (What indeed have I in common with them? or what
 with the destruction of them?)
 Only I will establish in the Mannahatta and in every
 city of these States inland and seaboard,
 And in the fields and woods, and above every keel little
 or large that dents the water,
 Without edifices or rules or any argument,
 The institution of the dear love of comrades.

THE PRAIRIE-GRASS DIVIDING.

THE prairie-grass dividing, its special odour breathing,
 I demand of it the spiritual corresponding,
 Demand the most copious and close companionship of
 men,
 Demand the blades to rise of words, acts, beings,
 Those of the open atmosphere, coarse, sunlit, fresh,
 nutritious,
 Those that go their own gait, erect, stepping with free-
 dom and command, leading not following,
 Those with a never-quell'd audacity, those with sweet
 and lusty flesh clear of taint,
 Those that look carelessly in the faces of Presidents and
 governors, as to say *Who are you?*
 Those of earth-born passion, simple, never constrain'd,
 never obedient,
 Those of inland America.

WHEN I PERUSE THE CONQUER'D FAME.

WHEN I peruse the conquer'd fame of heroes and the
victories of mighty generals, I do not envy the
generals,
Nor the President in his Presidency, nor the rich in his
great house,
But when I hear of the brotherhood of lovers, how it
was with them,
How together through life, through dangers, odium,
unchanging, long and long,
Through youth and through middle and old age, how
unfaltering, how affectionate and faithful they were,
Then I am pensive—I hastily walk away filled with the
bitterest envy.

NO LABOUR-SAVING MACHINE.

No labour-saving machine,
Nor discovery have I made,
Nor will I be able to leave behind me any wealthy
bequest to found a hospital or library,
Nor reminiscence of any deed of courage for America,
Nor literary success nor intellect, nor book for the book-
shelf,
But a few carols vibrating through the air I leave,
For comrades and lovers.

A GLIMPSE.

A GLIMPSE through an interstice caught,
 Of a crowd of workmen and drivers in a bar-room around
 the stove late of a winter night, and I unremark'd
 seated in a corner,
 Of a youth who loves me and whom I love, silently
 approaching and seating himself near, that he may
 hold me by the hand,
 A long while amid the noises of coming and going, of
 drinking and oath and smutty jest,
 There we two, content, happy in being together, speak-
 ing little, perhaps not a word.

WHAT THINK YOU I TAKE MY PEN
 IN HAND?

WHAT think you I take my pen in hand to record?
 The battle-ship, perfect-model'd, majestic, that I saw
 pass the offing to-day under full sail?
 The splendours of the past day? or the splendour of the
 night that envelops me?
 Or the vaunted glory and growth of the great city
 spread around me?—no;
 But merely of two simple men I saw to-day on the pier
 in the midst of the crowd, parting the parting of
 dear friends,
 The one to remain hung on the other's neck and
 passionately kiss'd him,
 While the one to depart tightly prest the one to remain
 in his arms.

A LEAF FOR HAND IN HAND.

A LEAF for hand in hand ;
You natural persons old and young !
You on the Mississippi and all the branches and bayous
of the Mississippi !
You friendly boatmen and mechanics ! you roughs !
You twain ! and all processions moving along the
streets !
I wish to infuse myself among you till I see it common
for you to walk hand in hand.

I DREAM'D IN A DREAM.

I DREAM'D in a dream I saw a city invincible to the
attacks of the whole of the rest of the earth,
I dream'd that was the new city of Friends,
Nothing was greater there than the quality of robust
love, it led the rest,
It was seen every hour in the actions of the men of that
city,
And in all their looks and words.

SOMETIMES WITH ONE I LOVE.

SOMETIMES with one I love I fill myself with rage for
fear I effuse unreturn'd love,
But now I think there is no unreturn'd love, the pay is
certain one way or another,
(I loved a certain person ardently and my love was not
return'd,
Yet out of that I have written these songs.)

TO THE EAST AND TO THE WEST.

To the East and to the West,
 To the man of the Seaside State and of Pennsylvania,
 To the Kanadian of the north, to the Southerner I love,
 These with perfect trust to depict you as myself, the
 germs are in all men,
 I believe the main purport of these States is to found a
 superb friendship, exaltè, previously unknown,
 Because I perceive it waits, and has been always waiting,
 latent in all men.

FAST ANCHOR'D ETERNAL O LOVE !

FAST-ANCHOR'D eternal O love ! O woman I love !
 O bride ! O wife ! more resistless than I can tell, the
 thought of you !
 Then separate, as disembodied or another born,
 Ethereal, the last athletic reality, my consolation,
 I ascend, I float in the regions of your love O man,
 O sharer of my roving life.

AMONG THE MULTITUDE.

AMONG the men and women the multitude,
 I perceive one picking me out by secret and divine signs,
 Acknowledging none else, not parent, wife, husband,
 brother, child, any nearer than I am,
 Some are baffled, but that one is not—that one knows
 me.

Ah lover and perfect equal,
I meant that you should discover me so by faint indirections,
And I when I meet you mean to discover you by the like
in you.

O YOU WHOM I OFTEN AND SILENTLY COME.

O you whom I often and silently come where you are
that I may be with you,
As I walk by your side or sit near, or remain in the same
room with you,
Little you know the subtle electric fire that for your sake
is playing within me.

FULL OF LIFE NOW.

FULL of life now, compact, visible,
I, forty years old the eighty-third year of the States,
To one a century hence or any number of centuries hence,
To you yet unborn these, seeking you.

When you read these I that was visible am become
invisible,
Now it is you, compact, visible, realising my poems,
seeking me,
Fancying how happy you were if I could be with you and
become your comrade ;
Be it as if I were with you. (Be not too certain but I
am now with you.)

THAT SHADOW MY LIKENESS.

THAT shadow my likeness that goes to and fro seeking
 a livelihood, chattering, chaffering,
 How often I find myself standing and looking at it where
 it flits,
 How often I question and doubt whether that is really
 me ;
 But among my lovers and carolling these songs,
 O I never doubt whether that is really me.





SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD.

1.

Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me leading wherever I
choose.

Henceforth I ask not good-fortune, I myself am good-
fortune,
Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need
nothing, [cisms,
Done with indoor complaints, libraries, querulous criti-
Strong and content I travel the open road.

The earth, that is sufficient,
I do not want the constellations any nearer,
I know they are very well where they are,
I know they suffice for those who belong to them.

(Still here I carry my old delicious burdens,
I carry them, men and women, I carry them with me
wherever I go,
I swear it is impossible for me to get rid of them,
I am fill'd with them, and I will fill them in return.)

2.

You road I enter upon and look around, I believe you
are not all that is here,
I believe that much unseen is also here.

Here the profound lesson of reception, nor preference nor
denial,
The black with his woolly head, the felon, the diseas'd,
the illiterate person, are not denied ;
The birth, the hasting after the physician, the beggar's
tramp, the drunkard's stagger, the laughing party
of mechanics,
The escaped youth, the rich person's carriage, the fop,
the eloping couple,
The early market-man, the hearse, the moving of fur-
niture into the town, the return back from the town,
They pass, I also pass, any thing passes, none can be
interdicted,
None but are accepted, none but shall be dear to me.

3.

You air that serves me with breath to speak !
You objects that call from diffusion my meanings and
give them shape !
You light that wraps me and all things in delicate
equable showers !
You paths worn in the irregular hollows by the roadsides !
I believe you are latent with unseen existences, you are
so dear to me.

You flagg'd walks of the cities ! you strong curbs at the
edges !
You ferries ! you planks and posts of wharves ! you
timber-lined sides ! you distant ships !

You rows of houses ! you window-pierc'd façades ! you
roofs !
You porches and entrances ! you copings and iron guards !
You windows whose transparent shells might expose so
much !
You doors and ascending steps ! you arches ! [crossings !
You grey stones of interminable pavements ! you trodden
From all that has touch'd you I believe you have im-
parted to yourselves, and now would impart the same
secretly to me,
From the living and the dead you have peopled your
impassive surfaces, and the spirits thereof would be
evident and amicable with me.

4.

The earth expanding right hand and left hand,
The picture alive, every part in its best light,
The music falling in where it is wanted, and stopping
where it is not wanted,
The cheerful voice of the public road, the gay fresh
sentiment of the road.

O highway I travel, do you say to me *Do not leave me ?*
Do you say *Venture not—if you leave me you are lost ?*
Do you say *I am already prepared, I am well beaten and*
undenied, adhere to me ?

O public road, I say back I am not afraid to leave you,
yet I love you,
You express me better than I can express myself,
You shall be more to me than my poem.

I think heroic deeds were all conceiv'd in the open air
and all free poems also,
I think I could stop here myself and do miracles,

I think whatever I shall meet on the road I shall like,
and whoever beholds me shall like me,
I think whoever I see must be happy.

5.

From this hour I ordain myself loos'd of limits and
imaginary lines,
Going where I list, my own master total and absolute,
Listening to others, considering well what they say,
Pausing, searching, receiving, contemplating,
Gently, but with undeniable will, divesting myself of the
holds that would hold me.

I inhale great draughts of space,
The east and the west are mine, and the north and the
south are mine.

I am larger, better than I thought,
I did not know I held so much goodness.

All seems beautiful to me,
I can repeat over to men and women You have done
such good to me I would do the same to you,
I will recruit for myself and you as I go,
I will scatter myself among men and women as I go,
I will toss a new gladness and roughness among them,
Whoever denies me it shall not trouble me,
Whoever accepts me he or she shall be blessed and shall
bless me.

6.

Now if a thousand perfect men were to appear it would
not amaze me,
Now if a thousand beautiful forms of women appear'd it
would not astonish me.

Now I see the secret of the making of the best persons,
It is to grow in the open air and to eat and sleep with
the earth.

Here a great personal deed has room,
(Such a deed seizes upon the hearts of the whole race of
men,
Its effusion of strength and will overwhelm laws and
mocks all authority and all argument against it.)

Here is the test of wisdom,
Wisdom is not finally tested in schools,
Wisdom cannot be pass'd from one having it to another
not having it,
Wisdom is of the soul, is not susceptible of proof, is its
own proof, [content,
Applies to all stages and objects and qualities and is
Is the certainty of the reality and immortality of things,
and the excellence of things;
Something there is in the float of the sight of things
that provokes it out of the soul.

Now I re-examine philosophies and religions,
They may prove well in lecture-rooms, yet not prove at
all under the spacious clouds and along the land-
scape and flowing currents.

Here is realisation,
Here is a man tallied—he realises here what he has in
him,
The past, the future, majesty, love—if they are vacant
of you, you are vacant of them.

Only the kernel of every object nourishes;
Where is he who tears off the husks for you and me?

Where is he that undoes stratagems and envelopes for
you and me ?

Here is adhesiveness, it is not previously fashion'd, it is
apropos ; [strangers ?
Do you know what it is as you pass to be loved by
Do you know the talk of those turning eye-balls ?

7.

Here is the efflux of the soul,
The efflux of the soul comes from within through
embower'd gates, ever provoking questions,
These yearnings why are they ? these thoughts in the
darkness why are they ?
Why are there men and women that while they are nigh
me the sunlight expands my blood ?
Why when they leave me do my pennants of joy sink
flat and lank ?
Why are there trees I never walk under but large and
melodious thoughts descend upon me ?
(I think they hang there winter and summer on those
trees and always drop fruit as I pass ;)
What is it I interchange so suddenly with strangers ?
What with some driver as I ride on the seat by his side ?
What with some fisherman drawing his seine by the
shore as I walk by and pause ?
What gives me to be free to a woman's and man's good-
will ? what gives them to be free to mine ?

8.

The efflux of the soul is happiness, here is happiness,
I think it pervades the open air, waiting at all times,
Now it flows unto us, we are rightly charged

Here rises the fluid and attaching character,
The fluid and attaching character is the freshness and
sweetness of man and woman,
(The herbs of the morning sprout no fresher and sweeter
every day out of the roots of themselves, than it
sprouts fresh and sweet continually out of itself.)

Toward the fluid and attaching character exudes the
sweat of the love of young and old,
From it falls distill'd the charm that mocks beauty and
attainments,
Toward it heaves the shuddering longing ache of contact.

9.

Allons ! whoever you are come travel with me !
Travelling with me you find what never tires.

The earth never tires,
The earth is rude, silent, incomprehensible at first,
Nature is rude and incomprehensible at first,
Be not discouraged, keep on, there are divine things well
envelop'd,
I swear to you there are divine things more beautiful
than words can tell.

Allons ! we must not stop here,
However sweet these laid-up stores, however convenient
this dwelling we cannot remain here,
However shelter'd this port and however calm these
waters we must not anchor here,
However welcome the hospitality that surrounds us we
are permitted to receive it but a little while.

10.

Allons ! the inducements shall be greater,
We will sail pathless and wild seas,
We will go where winds blow, waves dash, and the
Yankee clipper speeds by under full sail.

Allons ! with power, liberty, the earth, the elements,
Health, defiance, gaiety, self-esteem, curiosity ;
Allons ! from all formules !
From your formules, O bat-eyed and materialistic priests.

The stale cadaver blocks up the passage—the burial
waits no longer.

Allons ! yet take warning !
He travelling with me needs the best blood, thews,
endurance,
None may come to the trial till he or she bring courage
and health,
Come not here if you have already spent the best of
yourself, [bodies,
Only those may come who come in sweet and determin'd
No diseas'd person, no rum drinker or venereal taint is
permitted here.

(I and mine do not convince by arguments, similes,
rhymes,
We convince by our presence.)

11.

Listen ! I will be honest with you,
I do not offer the old smooth prizes, but offer rough new
prizes,

These are the days that must happen to you :
You shall not heap up what is call'd riches,
You shall scatter with lavish hand all that you earn or
achieve,
You but arrive at the city to which you were destin'd,
you hardly settle yourself to satisfaction before you
are call'd by an irresistible call to depart,
You shall be treated to the ironical smiles and mockings
of those who remain behind you,
What beckonings of love you receive you shall only
answer with passionate kisses of parting,
You shall not allow the hold of those who spread their
reach'd hands toward you.

12.

Allons ! after the great Companions, and to belong to
them !
They too are on the road—they are the swift and majestic
men—they are the greatest women,
Enjoyers of calms of seas and storms of seas,
Sailors of many a ship, walkers of many a mile of
land,
Habitués of many distant countries, habitués of far
distant dwellings,
Trusters of men and women, observers of cities, solitary
toilers,
Pausers and contemplators of tufts, blossoms, shells of
the shore,
Dancers at wedding-dances, kissers of brides, tender
helpers of children, bearers of children,
Soldiers of revolts, standers by gaping graves, lowerers-
down of coffins,

Journeyers over consecutive seasons, over the years, the
curious years each emerging from that which pre-
ceded it,
Journeyers as with companions, namely their own diverse
phases,
Forth-steppers from the latent unrealised baby-days,
Journeyers gaily with their own youth, journeyers with
their bearded and well-grain'd manhood,
Journeyers with their womanhood, ample, unsurpass'd,
content,
Journeyers with their own sublime old age, of manhood
or womanhood,
Old age, calm, expanded, broad with the haughty breadth
of the universe,
Old age, flowing free with the delicious near-by freedom
of death.

12.

Allons ! to that which is endless as it was beginningless,
To undergo much, tramps of days, rests of nights,
To merge all in the travel they tend to, and the days
and nights they tend to,
Again to merge them in the start of superior journeys,
To see nothing anywhere but what you may reach it and
pass it,
To conceive no time, however distant, but what you
may reach it and pass it,
To look up or down no road but it stretches and waits
for you, however long but it stretches and waits for
you,
To see no being, not God's or any, but you also go
thither,
To see no possession but you may possess it, enjoying all
without labour or purchase, abstracting the feast yet
not abstracting one particle of it,

To take the best of the farmer's farm and the rich man's
elegant villa, and the chaste blessings of the well-
married couple, and the fruits of orchards and
flowers of gardens,
To take to your use out of the compact cities as you pass
through,
To carry buildings and streets with you afterward where-
ever you go,
To gather the minds of men out of their brains as you
encounter them, to gather the love out of their
hearts.
To take your lovers on the road with you, for all that
you leave them behind you,
To know the universe itself as a road, as many roads, as
roads for travelling souls.

All parts away for the progress of souls,
All religion, all solid things, arts, governments—all
that was or is apparent upon this globe or any globe,
falls into niches and corners before the procession
of souls along the grand roads of the universe.

Of the progress of the souls of men and women along the
grand roads of the universe, all other progress is
the needed emblem and sustenance.

Forever alive, forever forward,
Stately, solemn, sad, withdrawn, baffled, mad, turbulent,
feeble, dissatisfied,
Desperate, proud, fond, sick, accepted by men, rejected
by men,
They go ! they go ! I know that they go, but I know not
where they go,
But I know that they go toward the best—toward some-
thing great.

Whoever you are, come forth ! or man or woman come forth !

You must not stay sleeping and dallying there in the house, though you built it, or though it has been built for you.

Out of the dark confinement ! out from behind the screen !

It is useless to protest, I know all and expose it.

Behold through you as bad as the rest,
Through the laughter, dancing, dining, supping, of
people,
Inside of dresses and ornaments, inside of those wash'd
and trimm'd faces,
Behold a secret silent loathing and despair.

No husband, no wife, no friend, trusted to hear the
confession,
Another self, a duplicate of every one, skulking and
hiding it goes,
Formless and wordless through the streets of the cities,
polite and bland in the parlours,
In the cars of railroads, in steamboats, in the public
assembly,
Home to the houses of men and women, at the table, in
the bed-room, everywhere,
Smartly attired, countenance smiling, form upright,
death under the breast-bones, hell under the skull-
bones,
Under the broadcloth and gloves, under the ribbons and
artificial flowers,
Keeping fair with the customs, speaking not a syllable
of itself.
Speaking of any thing else, but never of itself.

14.

Allons ! through struggles and wars !
The goal that was named cannot be countermanded.

Have the past struggles succeeded ?
What has succeeded ? yourself ? your nation ? Nature ?
Now understand me well—it is provided in the essence
of things that from any fruition of success, no
matter what, shall come forth something to make a
greater struggle necessary.

My call is the call of battle, I nourish active rebellion,
He going with me must go well arm'd,
He going with me goes often with spare diet, poverty,
angry enemies, desertions.

15.

Allons ! the road is before us !
It is safe—I have tried it—my own feet have tried it
well—be not detain'd !
Let the paper remain on the desk unwritten, and the
book on the shelf unopen'd !
Let the tools remain in the workshop ! let the money
remain unearn'd !
Let the school stand ! mind not the cry of the teacher !
Let the preacher preach in his pulpit ! let the lawyer
plead in the court, and the judge expound the law.

Camerado, I will give you my hand !
I give you my love more precious than money,
I give you myself before preaching or law ;
Will you give me yourself ? will you come travel with me ?
Shall we stick by each other as long as we live ?

CROSSING BROOKLYN FERRY.

1.

FLOOD-TIDE below me ! I see you face to face !
Clouds of the west—sun there half-an-hour high—I see
you also face to face.

Crowds of men and women attired in the usual costumes,
how curious you are to me !
On the ferry-boats the hundreds and hundreds that cross,
returning home, are more curious to me than you
suppose,
And you that shall cross from shore to shore years hence
are more to me, and more in my meditations, than
you might suppose.

2.

The impalpable sustenance of me from all things at all
hours of the day,
The simple, compact, well-join'd scheme, myself dis-
integrated, every one disintegrated yet part of the
scheme,
The similitudes of the past and those of the future,
The glories strung like beads on my smallest sights and
hearings, on the walk in the street and the passage
over the river,
The current rushing so swiftly and swimming with me
far away, [and them,
The others that are to follow me, the ties between me
The certainty of others, the life, love, sight, hearing of
others.

Others will enter the gates of the ferry and cross from
shore to shore,
Others will watch the run of the flood-tide,

Others will see the shipping of Manhattan north and west, and the heights of Brooklyn to the south and east,

Others will see the islands large and small ;

Fifty years hence, others will see them as they cross, the sun half-an-hour high,

A hundred years hence, or ever so many hundred years hence, others will see them,

Will enjoy the sunset, the pouring-in of the flood-tide, the falling back to the sea of the ebb-tide.

3.

It avails not, time nor place—distance avails not,

I am with you, you men and women of a generation, or ever so many generations hence, [felt,

Just as you feel when you look on the river and sky, so I

Just as any of you is one of a living crowd, I was one of a crowd,

Just as you are refresh'd by the gladness of the river and the bright flow, I was refresh'd,

Just as you stand and lean on the rail, yet hurry with the swift current, I stood yet was hurried,

Just as you look on the numberless masts of ships and the thick-stemm'd pipes of steamboats, I look'd.

I too many and many a time cross'd the river of old,

Watched the Twelfth-month sea-gulls, saw them high in the air floating with motionless wings, oscillating their bodies,

Saw how the glistening yellow lit up parts of their bodies, and left the rest in strong shadow,

Saw the slow wheeling circles and the gradual edging toward the south,

Saw the reflection of the summer sky in the water,

Had my eyes dazzled by the shimmering track of beams,

Look'd at the fine centrifugal spokes of light round the
shape of my head in the sunlit water,
Look'd on the haze on the hills southward and south-
westward, [violet,
Look'd on the vapour as it flew in fleeces tinged with
Look'd toward the lower bay to notice the vessels arriving,
Saw their approach, saw aboard those that were near me,
Saw the white sails of schooners and sloops, saw the
ships at anchor,
The sailors at work in the rigging or out astride the spars,
The round masts, the swinging motion of the hulls, the
slender serpentine pennants,
The large and small steamers in motion, the pilots in
their pilot houses,
The white wake left by the passage, the quick tremulous
whirl of the wheels,
The flags of all nations, the falling of them at sunset,
The scallop-edged waves in the twilight, the ladled cups,
the frolicsome crests and glistening,
The stretch afar growing dimmer and dimmer, the grey
walls of the granite storehouses by the docks,
On the river the shadowy group, the big steam-tug
closely flank'd on each side by the barges, the hay-
boat, the belated lighter,
On the neighbouring shore the fires from the foundry
chimneys burning high and glaringly into the night,
Casting their flicker of black contrasted with wild red
and yellow light over the tops of houses, and down
into the clefts of streets.

4.

These and all else were to me the same as they are to
you,
I loved well those cities, loved well the stately and rapid
river,

The men and women I saw were all near to me,
Others the same—others who look back on me because I
look'd forward to them,
(The time will come, though I stop here to-day and
to-night.)

5.

What is it then between us ?
What is the count of the scores or hundreds of years
between us ?

Whatever it is, it avails not—distance avails not, and
place avails not,
I too lived, Brooklyn of ample hills was mine,
I too walk'd the streets of Manhattan island, and bathed
in the waters around it,
I too felt the curious abrupt questionings stir within me,
In the day among crowds of people sometimes they came
upon me,
In my walks home late at night or as I lay in my bed
they came upon me,
I too had been struck from the float forever held in
solution,
I too had receiv'd identity by my body,
That I was I knew was of my body, and what I should
be I knew I should be of my body.

6.

It is not upon you alone the dark patches fall,
The dark threw its patches down upon me also,
The best I had done seem'd to me blank and suspicious,
My great thoughts as I supposed them, were they not in
reality meagre ?
Nor is it you alone who know what it is to be evil,
I am he who knew what it was to be evil,

I too knitted the old knot of contrariety,
 Blabb'd, blush'd, resented, lied, stole, grudg'd,
 Had guile, anger, lust, hot wishes I dared not speak,
 Was wayward, vain, greedy, shallow, sly, cowardly,
 malignant,
 The wolf, the snake, the hog, not wanting in me,
 The cheating look, the frivolous word, the adulterous
 wish, not wanting,
 Refusals, hates, postponements, meanness, laziness, none
 of these wanting,
 Was one with the rest, the days and haps of the rest,
 Was call'd by my highest name by clear loud voices of
 young men as they saw me approaching or passing,
 Felt their arms on my neck as I stood, or the negligent
 leaning of their flesh against me as I sat,
 Saw many I loved in the street or ferry-boat or public
 assembly, yet never told them a word, [actress,
 Play'd the part that still looks back on the actor or
 Lived the same life with the rest, the same old laughing,
 gnawing, sleeping,
 The same old role, the role that is what we make it, as
 great as we like,
 Or as small as we like, or both great and small.

7.

Closer yet I approach you.
 What thought you have of me now, I had as much of
 you—I laid in my stores in advance,
 I consider'd long and seriously of you before you were
 born.

Who was to know what should come home to me?
 Who knows but I am enjoying this?

Who knows, for all the distance, but I am as good as
looking at you now, for all you cannot see me ?

8.

Ah, what can ever be more stately and admirable to me
than mast-hemm'd Manhattan ?

River and sunset and scallop-edg'd waves of flood-tide ?
The sea-gulls oscillating their bodies, the hay-boat in the
twilight, and the belated lighter ?

What gods can exceed these that clasp me by the hand,
and with voices I love call me promptly and loudly
by my highest name as I approach ?

What is more subtle than this which ties me to the
woman or man that looks in my face ?

Which fuses me into you now, and pours my meaning
into you ?

We understand then do we not ?

What I promis'd without mentioning it, have you not
accepted ?

What the study could not teach—what the preaching
could not accomplish is accomplish'd, is it not ?

9.

Flow on, river ! flow with the flood-tide, and ebb with
the ebb-tide !

Frolic on, crested and scallop-edg'd waves !

Georgous clouds of the sunset ! drench with your splendour
me, or the men and women generations after
me !

Cross from shore to shore, countless crowds of passengers !
Stand up, tall masts of Mannahatta ! stand up, beautiful
hills of Brooklyn ! [and answers !

Throb baffled and curious brain ! throw out questions

Suspend here and everywhere, eternal float of solution !
Gaze, loving and thirsting eyes, in the house or street or
public assembly !
Sound out, voices of young men ! loudly and musically
call me by my nighest name ! [or actress !
Live, old life ! play the part that looks back on the actor
Play the old role, the role that is great or small accord-
ing as one makes it !
Consider, you who peruse me, whether I may not in
unknown ways be looking upon you ;
Be firm, rail over the river, to support those who lean
idly, yet haste with the hasting current ;
Fly-on, sea-birds ! fly sideways, or wheel in large circles
high in the air ;
Receive the summer sky, you water, and faithfully hold
it till all downcast eyes have time to take it from
you !
Diverge, fine spokes of light, from the shape of my head,
or any one's head, in the sunlit water !
Come on, ships from the lower bay ! pass up or down,
white-sail'd schooners, sloops, lighters !
Flaunt away, flags of all nations ! be duly lower'd at
sunset !
Burn high your fires, foundry chimneys ! cast black
shadows at nightfall ! cast red and yellow light
over the tops of the houses !
Appearances, now or henceforth, indicate what you are,
You necessary film, continue to envelop the soul,
About my body for me, and your body for you, be hung
our divinist aromas,
Thrive, cities—bring your freight, bring your shows,
ample and sufficient rivers, [spiritual,
Expand, being than which none else is perhaps more
Keep your places, objects than which none else is more
lasting.

You have waited, you always wait, you dumb, beautiful
ministers,
We receive you with free sense at last, and are insatiate
henceforward,
Not you any more shall be able to foil us, or withhold
yourselves from us,
We use you, and do not cast you aside—we plant you
permanently within us,
We fathom you not—we love you—there is perfection
in you also,
You furnish your parts toward eternity,
Great or small, you furnish your parts toward the soul.

SONG OF THE ANSWERER.

1.

Now list to my morning's romanza, I tell the signs of
the Answerer,
To the cities and farms I sing as they spread in the
sunshine before me.

A young man comes to me bearing a message from his
brother,
How shall the young man know the whether and when
of his brother?
Tell him to send me the signs.

And I stand before the young man face to face, and take
his right hand in my left hand and his left hand in
my right hand,
And I answer for his brother and for men, and I answer
for him that answers for all, and send these signs.

Him all wait for, him all yield up to, his word is decisive
and final,

Him they accept, in him lave, in him perceive themselves
as amid light,

Him they immerse and he immerses them.

Beautiful women, the haughtiest nations, laws, the
landscape, people, animals,

The profound earth and its attributes and the unquiet
ocean, (so tell I my morning's romanza,)

All enjoyments and properties and money, and whatever
money will buy,

The best farms, others toiling and planting and he
unavoidably reaps,

The noblest and costliest cities, others grading and
building and he domiciles there,

Nothing for any one but what is for him, near and far
are for him, the ships in the offing,

The perpetual shows and marches on land are for him if
they are for anybody.

He puts things in their attitudes,

He puts to-day out of himself with plasticity and love,

He places his own times, reminiscences, parents, brothers
and sisters, associations, employment, politics, so
that the rest never shame them afterward, nor
assume to command them.

He is the Answerer.

What can be answer'd he answers, and what cannot be
answer'd he shows how it cannot be answer'd.

A man is a summons and challenge,

(It is vain to skulk—do you hear that mocking and
laughter? do you hear the ironical echoes?)

Books, friendships, philosophers, priests, action, pleasure,
pride, beat up and down seeking to give satisfaction,
He indicates the satisfaction, and indicates them that
beat up and down also.

Whichever the sex, whatever the season or place, he may
go freshly and gently and safely by day or by night,
He has the pass-key of hearts, to him the response of the
prying of hands on the knobs.

His welcome is universal, the flow of beauty is not more
welcome or universal than he is,
The person he favours by day or sleeps with at night is
blessed.

Every existence has its idiom, every thing has an idiom
and tongue,
He resolves all tongues into his own and bestows it upon
men, and any man translates, and any man trans-
lates himself also,
One part does not counteract another part, he is the
joiner, he sees how they join.

He says indifferently and alike *How are you friend?* to
the President at his levee,
And he says *Good-day my brother*, to Cudge that hoes in
the sugar-field,
And both understand him and know that his speech is
right.

He walks with perfect ease in the capitol,
He walks among the Congress, and one Representative
says to another, *Here is our equal appearing and*
new.

Then the mechanics take him for a mechanic,
And the soldiers suppose him to be a soldier, and the
sailors that he has follow'd the sea,
And the authors take him for an author, and the artists
for an artist,
And the labourers perceive he could labour with them and
love them,
No matter what the work is, that he is the one to follow
it or has follow'd it,
No matter what the nation, that he might find his
brothers and sisters there.

The English believe he comes of their English stock,
A Jew to the Jew he seems, a Russ to the Russ, usual
and near, removed from none.

Whoever he looks at in the traveller's coffee-house claims
him,
The Italian or Frenchman is sure, the German is sure,
the Spaniard is sure, and the island Cuban is sure,
The engineer, the deck-hand on the great lakes, or on
the Mississippi or St. Lawrence or Sacramento, or
Hudson or Paumanok sound, claims him.

The gentleman of perfect blood acknowledges his perfect
blood,
The insulter, the prostitute, the angry person, the
beggar, see themselves in the ways of him, he
strangely transmutes them,
They are not vile any more, they hardly know them-
selves they are so grown.

2.

The indications and tally of time,
Perfect sanity shows the master among philosophers,

Time, always without break, indicates itself in parts,
 What always indicates the poet is the crowd of the
 pleasant company of singers, and their words,
 The words of the singers are the hours or minutes
 of the light or dark, but the words of the maker of
 poems are the general light and dark,
 The maker of poems settles justice, reality, immortality,
 His insight and power encircle things and the human
 race,
 He is the glory and extract thus far of things and of the
 human race.

The singers do not beget, only the Poet begets,
 The singers are welcom'd, understood, appear often
 enough, but rare has the day been, likewise the
 spot, of the birth of the maker of poems, the
 Answerer,
 (Not every century nor every five centuries has contain'd
 such a day, for all its names.)

The singers of successive hours of centuries may have
 ostensible names, but the name of each of them is
 one of the singers,
 The name of each is, eye-singer, ear-singer, head-singer,
 sweet-singer, night-singer, parlour-singer, love-
 singer, weird singer, or something else.

All this time and at all times wait the words of true
 poems,
 The words of true poems do not merely please,
 The true poets are not followers of beauty but the august
 masters of beauty ;
 The greatness of sons is the exuding of the greatness of
 mothers and fathers, [of science.
 The words of true poems are the tuft and final applause

Divine instinct, breadth of vision, the law of reason,
health, rudeness of body, withdrawnness,
Gaiety, sun-tan, air-sweetness, such are some of the
words of poems.

The sailor and traveller underlie the maker of poems,
the Answerer,
The builder, geometer, chemist, anatomist, phrenologist,
artist, all these underlie the maker of poems, the
Answerer.

The words of the true poems give you more than poems,
They give you to form for yourself poems, religions,
politics, war, peace, behaviour, histories, essays,
daily life, and every thing else,
They balance ranks, colours, races, creeds, and the sexes,
They do not seek beauty, they are sought,
Forever touching them or close upon them follows beauty,
longing, fain, love-sick.

They prepare for death, yet are they not the finish
but rather the outset,
They bring none to his or her terminus or to be content
and full,
Whom they take they take into space to behold the
birth of stars, to learn one of the meanings,
To launch off with absolute faith, to sweep through the
ceaseless rings and never be quiet again.

A SONG OF JOYS.

O to make the most jubilant song !
Full of music—full of manhood, womanhood, infancy !
Full of common employments—full of grain and trees.

O for the voices of animals—O for the swiftness and
balance of fishes !

O for the dropping of raindrops in a song !

O for the sunshine and motion of waves in a song !

O the joy of my spirit—it is uncaged—it darts like
lightning !

It is not enough to have this globe or a certain time,
I will have thousands of globes and all time.

O the engineer's joys ! to go with a locomotive !

To hear the hiss of steam, the merry shriek, the steam-
whistle, the laughing locomotive !

To push with resistless way and speed off in the distance.

O the gleesome saunter over fields and hillsides !

The leaves and flowers of the commonest weeds, the
moist fresh stillness of the woods,

The exquisite smell of the earth at daybreak, and all
through the forenoon.

O the horseman's and horsewoman's joys !

The saddle, the gallop, the pressure upon the seat, the
cool gurgling by the ears and hair.

O the fireman's joys !

I hear the alarm at dead of night,

I hear bells, shouts ! I pass the crowd, I run !

The sight of the flames maddens me with pleasure.

O the joy of the strong-brawned fighter, towering in the
arena in perfect condition, conscious of power,
thirsting to meet his opponent.

O the joy of that vast elemental sympathy which only
the human soul is capable of generating and emitting
in steady and limitless floods.

O the mother's joys !
The watching, the endurance, the precious love, the
anguish, the patiently yielded life.

O the joy of increase, growth, recuperation,
The joy of soothing and pacifying, the joy of concord and
harmony.

O to go back to the place where I was born,
To hear the birds sing once more,
To ramble about the house and barn and over the fields
once more,
And through the orchard and along the old lanes once
more.

O to have been brought up on bays, lagoons, creeks, or
along the coast,
To continue and be employ'd there all my life,
The briny and damp smell, the shore, the salt weeds
exposed at low water,
The work of fishermen, the work of the eel-fisher and
clam-fisher ;
I come with my clam-rake and spade, I come with my
eel-spear,
Is the tide out ? I join the group of clam-diggers on the
flats
I laugh and work with them, I joke at my work like a
mettlesome young man ;
In winter I take my eel-basket and eel-spear and travel
out on foot on the ice—I have a small axe to cut
holes in the ice,

Behold me well-clothed going gaily or returning in the
afternoon, my brood of tough boys accompanying
me,
My brood of grown and part-grown boys, who love to be
with no one else so well as they love to be with me,
By day to work with me, and by night to sleep with me.

Another time in warm weather out in a boat, to lift the
lobster-pots where they are sunk with heavy stones,
(I know the buoys,)

O the sweetness of the Fifth-month morning upon the
water as I row just before sunrise toward the buoys,
I pull the wicker pots up slantingly, the dark green
lobsters are desperate with their claws as I take them
out, I insert wooden pegs in the joints of their
pineers, [back to the shore,
I go to all the places one after another, and then row
There in a huge kettle of boiling water the lobsters shall
be boil'd till their colour becomes scarlet.

Another time mackerel-taking,
Voracious, mad for the hook, near the surface, they seem
to fill the water for miles ;
Another time fishing for rock-fish in Chesapeake bay, I
one of the brown-faced crew ;
Another time trailing for blue-fish off Paumanok, I stand
with braced body,
My left foot is on the gunwale, my right arm throws far
out the coils of slender rope,
In sight around me the quick veering and darting of
fifty skiffs, my companions.

O boating on the rivers,
The voyage down the St. Lawrence, the superb scenery,
the steamers,

The ships sailing, the Thousand Islands, the occasional
timber-raft and the raftsmen with long-reaching
sweep-oars,
The little huts on the rafts, and the stream of smoke
when they cock supper at evening.

(O something pernicious and dread !
Something far away from a puny and pious life !
Something unproved ! something in a trance !
Something escaped from the anchorage and driving free.)

O to work in mines, or forging iron,
Foundry casting, the foundry itself, the rude high roof,
the ample and shadow'd space,
The furnace, the hot liquid pour'd out and running.

O to resume the joys of the soldier !
To feel the presence of a brave commanding officer—to
feel his sympathy !
To behold his calmness—to be warm'd in the rays of his
smile ! [beat !
To go to battle—to hear the bugles play and the drums
To hear the crash of artillery—to see the glistening of
the bayonets and musket-barrels in the sun !
To see men fall and die and not complain !
To taste the savage taste of blood—to be so devilish !
To gloat so over the wounds and deaths of the enemy !

O the whaleman's joys ! O I cruise my old cruise again !
I feel the ship's motion under me, I feel the Atlantic
breezes fanning me,
I hear the cry again sent down from the mast-head,
There—she blows !
Again I spring up the rigging to look with the rest—we
descend, wild with excitement.

I leap in the lower'd boat, we row toward our prey where
 he lies,
We approach stealthy and silent, I see the mountainous
 mass, lethargic, basking,
I see the harpooner standing up, I see the weapon dart
 from his vigorous arm ;
O swift again far out in the ocean the wounded whale,
 settling, running to windward, tows me,
Again I see him rise to breathe, we row close again,
I see a lance driven through his side, press'd deep, turn'd
 in the wound,
Again we back off, I see him settle again, the life is
 leaving him fast,
As he rises he spouts blood, I see him swim in circles
 narrower and narrower, swiftly cutting the water—I
 see him die,
He gives one convulsive leap in the centre of the circle,
 and then falls flat and still in the bloody foam.

O the old manhood of me, my noblest joy of all !
My children and grandchildren, my white hair and
 beard,
My largeness, calmness, majesty, out of the long stretch
 of my life.

O ripen'd joy of womanhood ! O happiness at last !
I am more than eighty years of age, I am the most
 venerable mother,
How clear is my mind—how all people draw nigh to me !
What attractions are these beyond any before ? what
 bloom more than the bloom of youth ?
What beauty is this that descends upon me and rises out
 of me ?

O the orator's joys !

To inflate the chest, to roll the thunder of the voice out
from the ribs and throat,

To make the people rage, weep, hate, desire, with your-
self,

To lead America—to quell America with a great tongue.

O the joy of my soul leaning pois'd on itself, receiving
identity through materials and loving them,
observing characters and absorbing them,

My soul vibrated back to me from them, from sight,
hearing, touch, reason, articulation, comparison,
memory, and the like,

The real life of my senses and flesh transcending my
senses and flesh,

My body done with materials, my sight done with my
material eyes,

Proved to me this day beyond cavil that it is not my
material eyes which finally see,

Nor my material body which finally loves, walks,
laughs, shouts, embraces, procreates.

O the farmer's joys !

Ohioan's, Illinoisian's, Wisconsinese', Kanadian's,
Iowan's, Kansian's, Missourian's, Oregonese' joys !

To rise at peep of day and pass forth nimbly to work,

To plough land in the fall for winter-sown crops,

To plough land in the spring for maize,

To train orchards, to graft the trees, to gather apples in
the fall.

O to bathe in the swimming-bath, or in a good place
along shore,

To splash the water ! to walk ankle-deep, or race naked
along the shore.

O to realise space !

The plenteousness of all, that there are no bounds,
To emerge and be of the sky, of the sun and moon and
flying clouds, as one with them.

O the joy of a manly self-hood !

To be servile to none, to defer to none, not to any
tyrant known or unknown,
To walk with erect carriage, a step springy and elastic,
To look with calm gaze or with a flashing eye,
To speak with a full and sonorous voice out of a broad
chest,
To confront with your personality all the other person-
alities of the earth.

Know'st thou the excellent joys of youth ?

Joys of the dear companions and of the merry word and
laughing face ?
Joy of the glad light-beaming day, joy of the wide-
breath'd games ?
Joy of sweet music, joy of the lighted ball-room and the
dancers ?
Joy of the plenteous dinner, strong carouse and drinking !

Yet O my soul supreme !

Know'st thou the joys of pensive thought ?

Joys of the free and lonesome heart, the tender, gloomy
heart ?
Joys of the solitary walk, the spirit bow'd yet proud, the
suffering and the struggle ?
The agonistic throes, the ecstasies, joys of the solemn
musings day or night ?
Joys of the thought of Death, the great spheres Time and
Space ?

Prophetic joys of better, loftier love's ideals, the divine
wife, the sweet, eternal, perfect comrade?
Joys all thine own undying one, joys worthy thee O
Soul.

O while I live to be the ruler of life, not a slave,
To meet life as a powerful conqueror,
No fumes, no ennui, no more complaints or scornful
criticisms,
To these proud laws of the air, the water, and the ground,
proving my interior soul impregnable,
And nothing exterior shall ever take command of me.

For not life's joys alone I sing, repeating—the joy of
death !
The beautiful touch of Death, soothing and benumbing
a few moments, for reasons,
Myself discharging my excrementitious body to be burn'd,
or render'd to powder, or buried,
My real body doubtless left to me for other spheres,
My avoided body nothing more to me, returning to the
purifications, further offices, eternal uses of the
earth.

O to attract by more than attraction !
How it is I know not—yet behold ! the something which
obeys none of the rest,
It is offensive, never defensive—yet how magnetic it
draws.

O to struggle against great odds, to meet enemies
undaunted !
To be entirely alone with them, to find how much one
can stand !
To look strife, torture, prison, popular odium, face to
face !

To mount the scaffold, to advance to the muzzles of guns
with perfect nonchalance !
To be indeed a God !

O to sail to sea in a ship !
To leave this steady unendurable land,
To leave the tiresome sameness of the streets, the side-
walks and the houses,
To leave you O you solid motionless land, and entering
a ship,
To sail and sail and sail !

O to have life henceforth a poem of new joys !
To dance, clap hands, exult, shout, skip, leap, roll on,
float on !
To be a sailor of the world bound for all ports,
A ship itself, (see indeed these sails I spread to the sun
and air,)
A swift and swelling ship full of rich words, full of joys.

SONG OF THE BROAD-AXE.

1.

WEAPON shapely, naked, wan,
Head from the mother's bowels drawn,
Wooded flesh and metal bone, limb only one and lip only
one,
Grey-blue leaf by red-heat grown, helve produced from
a little seed sown,
Resting the grass amid and upon,
To be lean'd and to lean on.

Strong shapes and attributes of strong shapes, masculine
trades, sights and sounds,
Long varied train of an emblem, dabs of music,
Fingers of the organist skipping staccato over the keys
of the great organ

2.

Welcome are all earth's lands, each for its kind,
Welcome are lands of pine and oak,
Welcome are lands of the lemon and fig,
Welcome are lands of gold,
Welcome are lands of wheat and maize, welcome those
of the grape,
Welcome are lands of sugar and rice,
Welcome the cotton-lands, welcome those of the white
potato and sweet potato,
Welcome are mountains, flats, sands, forests, prairies,
Welcome the rich borders of rivers, table-lands, openings,
Welcome the measureless grazing-lands, welcome the
teeming soil of orchards, flax, honey, hemp;
Welcome just as much the other more hard-faced lands,
Lands rich as lands of gold or wheat and fruit lands,
Lands of mines, lands of the manly and rugged ores,
Lands of coal, copper, lead, tin, zinc,
Lands of iron—lands of the make of the axe.

3.

The log at the wood-pile, the axe supported by it,
The sylvan hut, the vine over the doorway, the space
clear'd for a garden,
The irregular tapping of rain down on the leaves after
the storm is lull'd,
The wailing and moaning at intervals, the thought of
the sea,

The thought of ships struck in the storm and put on
their beam ends, and the cutting away of masts,
The sentiment of the huge timbers of old-fashion'd
houses and barns,
The remember'd print or narrative, the voyage at a
venture of men, families, goods,
The disembarkation, the founding of a new city,
The voyage of those who sought a New England and
found it, the outset anywhere,
The settlements of the Arkansas, Colorado, Ottawa,
Willamette, [bags ;
The slow progress, the scant fare, the axe, rifle, saddle-
The beauty of all adventurous and daring persons,
The beauty of wood-boys and wood-men with their clear
untrimm'd faces,
The beauty of independence, departure, actions that rely
on themselves,
The American contempt for statutes and ceremonies, the
boundless impatience of restraint,
The loose drift of character, the inkling through random
types, the solidification ;
The butcher in the slaughter-house, the hands aboard
schooners and sloops, the raftsmen, the pioneer,
Lumbermen in their winter camp, daybreak in the woods,
stripes of snow on the limbs of trees, the occasional
snapping,
The glad clear sound of one's own voice, the merry song,
the natural life of the woods, the strong day's work,
The blazing fire at night, the sweet taste of supper, the
talk, the bed of hemlock-boughs and the bear-
skin ;
The house-builder at work in cities or anywhere,
The preparatory jointing, squaring, sawing, mortising,
The hoist-up of beams, the push of them in their places,
laying them regular,

Setting the studs by their tenons in the mortises accord-
ing as they were prepared,
The blows of mallets and hammers, the attitudes of the
men, their curv'd limbs,
Bending, standing, astride the beams, driving in pins,
holding on by posts and braces,
The hook'd arm over the plate, the other arm wielding
the axe,
The floor-men forcing the planks close to be nail'd,
Their postures bringing their weapons downward on the
bearers,
The echoes resounding through the vacant building ;
The huge storehouse carried up in the city well under
way,
The six framing-men, two in the middle and two at each
end, carefully bearing on their shoulders a heavy
stick for a cross-beam,
The crowded line of masons with trowels in their right
hands rapidly laying the long side-wall, two
hundred feet from front to rear,
The flexible rise and fall of backs, the continual click of
the trowels striking the bricks,
The bricks one after another each laid so workmanlike
in its place, and set with a knock of the trowel-
handle,
The piles of materials, the mortar on the mortar-boards,
and the steady replenishing by the hod-men ;
Spar-makers in the spar-yard, the swarming row of well-
grown apprentices,
The swing of their axes on the square-hew'd log
shaping it toward the shape of a mast,
The brisk short crackle of the steel driven slantingly
into the pine,
The butter-colour'd chips flying off in great flakes and
slivers,

The limber motion of brawny young arms and hips in
easy costumes,
The constructor of wharves, bridges, piers, bulk-heads,
floats, stays against the sea ;
The city fireman, the fire that suddenly bursts forth in
the close-pack'd square,
The arriving engines, the hoarse shouts, the nimble
stepping and daring,
The strong command through the fire-trumpets, the
falling in line, the rise and fall of the arms forcing
the water,
The slender, spasmic, blue-white jets, the bringing to
bear of the hooks and ladders and their execution,
The crash and cut away of connecting wood-work, or
through floors if the fire smoulders under them,
The crowd with their lit faces watching, the glare and
dense shadows ; [him,
The forger at his forge-furnace and the user of iron after
The maker of the axe large and small, and the welder
and temperer,
The chooser breathing his breath on the cold steel and
trying the edge with his thumb,
The one who clean-shapes the handle and sets it firmly
in the socket ;
The shadowy processions of the portraits of the past
users also,
The primal patient mechanics, the architects and
engineers,
The far-off Assyrian edifice and Mizra edifice,
The Roman lictors preceding the consuls,
The antique European warrior with his axe in combat,
The uplifted arm, the clatter of blows on the helmeted
head,
The death-howl, the limpsy tumbling body, the rush of
friend and foe thither,

The siege of revolted lieges determin'd for liberty,
 The summons to surrender, the battering at castle gates,
 the truce and parley,
 The sack of an old city in its time,
 The bursting in of mercenaries and bigots tumultuously
 and disorderly,
 Roar, flames, blood, drunkenness, madness,
 Goods freely rifled from houses, and temples, screams of
 women in the gripe of brigands,
 Craft and thievery of camp-followers, men running, old
 persons despairing,
 The hell of war, the cruelties of creeds,
 The list of all executive deeds and words just or unjust,
 The power of personality just or unjust.

4.

Muscle and pluck forever !
 What invigorates life invigorates death,
 And the dead advance as much as the living advance,
 And the future is no more uncertain than the present,
 For the roughness of the earth and of man encloses as
 much as the delicatessen of the earth and of man,
 And nothing endures but personal qualities.

What do you think endures ?
 Do you think a great city endures ?
 Or a teeming manufacturing state ? or a prepared
 constitution ? or the best built steamships ?
 Or hotels of granite and iron ? or any chef-d'œuvres of
 engineering, forts, armaments ?

Away ! these are not to be cherish'd for themselves,
 They fill their hour, the dancers dance, the musicians
 play for them,

The show passes, all does well enough of course,
All does very well till one flash of defiance.

A great city is that which has the greatest men and
women,
If it be a few ragged huts it is still the greatest city in
the whole world.

5.

The place where a great city stands is not the place of
stretch'd wharves, docks, manufactures, deposits of
produce merely,
Nor the place of ceaseless salutes of new-comers or the
anchor-lifters of the departing,
Nor the place of the tallest and costliest buildings or
shops selling goods from the rest of the earth,
Nor the place of the best libraries and schools, nor the
place where money is plentiest,
Nor the place of the most numerous population.

Where the city stands with the brawniest breed of
orators and bards,
Where the city stands that is belov'd by these, and
loves them in return and understands them,
Where no monuments exist to heroes but in the common
words and deeds,
Where thrift is in its place, and prudence is in its place,
Where the men and women think lightly of the laws,
Where the slave ceases, and the master of slaves ceases,
Where the populace rise at once against the never-ending
audacity of elected persons,
Where fierce men and women pour forth as the sea to
the whistle of death pours its sweeping and unript
waves,

Where outside authority enters always after the precedence of inside authority,
Where the citizen is always the head and ideal, and President, Mayor, Governor, and what not, are agents for pay,
Where children are taught to be laws to themselves, and to depend on themselves,
Where equanimity is illustrated in affairs,
Where speculations on the soul are encouraged,
Where women walk in public processions in the streets the same as the men,
Where they enter the public assembly and take places the same as the men ;
Where the city of the faithfulest friends stands,
Where the city of the cleanliness of the sexes stands,
Where the city of the healthiest fathers stands,
Where the city of the best-bodied mothers stands,
There the great city stands.

6.

How beggarly appear arguments before a defiant deed !
How the floridness of the materials of cities shrivels before a man's or woman's look !

All waits or goes by default till a strong being appears ;
A strong being is the proof of the race and of the ability of the universe
When he or she appears materials are overaw'd,
The dispute on the soul stops,
The old customs and phrases are confronted, turn'd back, or laid away.

What is your money-making now ? what can it do now ?
What is your respectability now ?

What are your theology, tuition, society, traditions,
statute-books, now ?

Where are your jibes of being now ?

Where are your cavils about the soul now ?

7.

A sterile landscape covers the ore, there is as good as the
best for all the forbidding appearance,

There is the mine, there are the miners,

The forge-furnace is there, the melt is accomplish'd, the
hammersmen are at hand with their tongs and
hammers,

What always served and always serves is at hand.

Than this nothing has better served, it has served all,
Served the fluent-tongued and subtle-sensed Greek, and
long ere the Greek, [any,

Served in building the buildings that last longer than

Served the Hebrew, the Persian, the most ancient
Hindustanee,

Served the mound-raiser on the Mississippi, served those
whose relics remain in Central America,

Served Albic temples in woods or on plains, with unhewn
pillars and the druids,

Served the artificial clefts, vast, high, silent, on the
snow-cover'd hills of Scandinavia,

Served those who time out of mind made on the granite
walls rough sketches of the sun, moon, stars, ships,
ocean waves,

Served the paths of the irruptions of the Goths, served
the pastoral tribes and nomads,

Served the long distant Kelt, served the hardy pirates
of the Baltic,

Served before any of those the venerable and harmless
 men of Ethiopia,
 Served the making of helms for the galleys of pleasure,
 and the making of those for war,
 Served all great works on land and all great works on
 the sea,
 For the mediæval ages and before the mediæval ages,
 Served not the living only then as now, but served the
 dead.

8.

I see the European headsman,
 He stands mask'd, clothed in red, with huge legs and
 strong naked arms,
 And leans on a ponderous axe.

(Whom have you slaughter'd lately European headsman?
 Whose is that blood upon you so wet and sticky?)

I see the clear sunsets of the martyrs,
 I see from the scaffolds the descending ghosts,
 Ghosts of dead lords, uncrown'd ladies, impeach'd
 ministers, rejected kings, [rest.
 Rivals, traitors, poisoners, disgraced chieftains and the

I see those who in any land have died for the good
 cause, [out,
 The seed is spare, nevertheless the crop shall never run
 (Mind you O foreign kings, O priests, the crop shall
 never run out.)

I see the blood wash'd entirely away from the axe,
 Both blade and helve are clean,
 They spirt no more the blood of European nobles, they
 clasp no more the necks of queens.

I see the headsman withdraw and become useless,
I see the scaffold untrodden and mouldy, I see no longer
any axe upon it,
I see the mighty and friendly emblem of the power of
my own race, the newest, largest race.

9.

(America ! I do not vaunt my love for you.
I have what I have.)

The axe leaps !
The solid forest gives fluid utterances,
They tumble forth, they rise and form,
Hut, tent, landing, survey,
Flail, plough, pick, crowbar, spade,
Shingle, rail, prop, wainscot, jamb, lath, panel, gable,
Citadel, ceiling, saloon, academy, organ, exhibition-
house, library,
Cornice, trellis, pilaster, balcony, window, turret, porch,
Hoe, rake, pitchfork, pencil, waggon, staff, saw, jack-
plane, mallet, wedge, rounce,
Chair, tub, hoop, table, wicket, vane, sash, floor,
Work-box, chest, string'd instrument, boat, frame, and
what not,
Capitols of States, and capitol of the nation of States,
Long stately rows of avenues, hospitals for orphans or
for the poor or sick,
Manhattan steamboats and clippers taking the measure
of all seas.

The shapes arise !
Shapes of the using of axes anyhow, and the users and
all that neighbours them,
Cutters down of wood and haulers of it to the Penobscot
or Kennebec.

Dwellers in cabins among the Californian mountains or
by the little lakes, or on the Columbia,
Dwellers south on the banks of the Gila or Rio Grande,
friendly gatherings, the characters and fun,
Dwellers along the St. Lawrence, or north in Kanada, or
down by the Yellowstone, dwellers on coasts and off
coasts,
Seal-fishers, whalers, arctic seamen breaking passages
through the ice.

The shapes arise !
Shapes of factories, arsenals, foundries, markets,
Shapes of the two-threaded tracks of railroads,
Shapes of the sleepers of bridges, vast frameworks, girders,
arches, [river craft,
Shapes of the fleets of barges, tows, lake and canal craft,
Ship-yards and dry-docks along the Eastern and Western
seas, and in many a bay and by-place,
The live-oak kelsons, the pine planks, the spars, the
hackmatack-roots for knees,
The ships themselves on their ways, the tiers of scaffolds,
the workmen busy outside and inside,
The tools lying around, the great auger and little auger,
the adze, bolt, line, square, gouge, and bead-plane.

10.

The shapes arise !
The shape measur'd, saw'd, jack'd, join'd, stain'd,
The coffin-shape for the dead to lie within in his shroud,
The shape got out in posts, in the bedstead posts, in the
posts of the bride's bed,
The shape of the little trough, the shape of the rockers
beneath, the shape of the babe's cradle,
The shape of the floor-planks, the floor-planks for
dancers' feet,

The shape of the planks of the family home, the home
of the friendly parents and children,
The shape of the roof of the home of the happy young
man and woman, the roof over the well-married
young man and woman,
The roof over the supper joyously cook'd by the chaste
wife, and joyously eaten by the chaste husband,
content after his day's work.

The shapes arise !

The shape of the prisoner's place in the court-room, and
of him or her seated in the place,
The shape of the liquor-bar lean'd against by the young
rum-drinker and the old rum-drinker,
The shape of the ashamed and angry stairs trod by
sneaking footsteps,
The shape of the sly settee, and the adulterous unwhole-
some couple,
The shape of the gambling-board with its devilish
winnings and losings,
The shape of the step-ladder for the convicted and
sentenced murderer, the murderer with haggard face
and pinion'd arms,
The sheriff at hand with his deputies, the silent and
white-lipp'd crowd, the dangling of the rope.

The shapes arise !

Shapes of doors giving many exits and entrances,
The door passing the dissever'd friend flush'd and in
haste,
The door that admits good news and bad news,
The door whence the son left home confident and puff'd
up,
The door he enter'd again from a long and scandalous
absence, diseas'd, broken down, without innocence,
without means.

11.

Her shape arises !
She less guarded than ever, yet more guarded than ever,
The gross and soil'd she moves among do not make her
gross and soil'd,
She knows the thoughts as she passes, nothing is con-
ceal'd from her,
She is none the less considerate or friendly therefor,
She is best belov'd, it is without exception, she has no
reason to fear and she does not fear,
Oaths, quarrels, hiccupp'd songs, smutty expressions,
are idle to her as she passes,
She is silent, she is possess'd of herself, they do not
offend her,
She receives them as the laws of Nature receive them,
she is strong,
She too is a law of Nature—there is no law stronger than
she is.

12

The main shapes arise !
Shapes of Democracy total, result of centuries,
Shapes ever projecting other shapes,
Shapes of turbulent manly cities,
Shapes of the friends and home-givers of the whole
earth,
Shapes bracing the earth and braced with the whole
earth.

SONG OF THE REDWOOD-TREE.

1.

A CALIFORNIA song,
A prophecy and indirection, a thought impalpable to
breathe as air,

A chorus of dryads, fading, departing, or hamadryads
departing,
A murmuring, fateful, giant voice, out of the earth and
sky,
Voice of a mighty dying tree in the redwood forest
dense.

*Farewell my brethren,
Farewell O earth and sky, farewell ye neighbouring
waters,
My time has ended, my term has come.*

Along the northern coast,
Just back from the rock-bound shore and the caves,
In the saline air from the sea in the Mendocino country,
With the surge for base and accompaniment low and
hoarse,
With crackling blows of axes sounding musically driven
by strong arms,
Riven deep by the sharp tongues of the axes, there in
the redwood forest dense,
I heard the mighty tree its death-chant chanting.

The choppers heard not, the camp shanties echoed not,
The quick-ear'd teamsters and chain and jack-screw
men heard not,
As the wood-spirits came from their haunts of a thousand
years to join the refrain,
But in my soul I plainly heard.

Murmuring out of its myriad leaves,
Down from its lofty top rising two hundred feet high,
Out of its stalwart trunk and limbs, out of its foot-thick
bark,
That chant of the seasons and time, chant not of the
past only but the future.

*You untold life of me,
And all you venerable and innocent joys,
Perennial hardy life of me with joys 'mid rain and many
a summer sun,
And the white snows and night and the wild winds ;
O the great patient rugged joys, my soul's strong joys
unreck'd by man,
(For now I bear the soul befitting me, I too have con-
sciousness, identity,
And all the rocks and mountains have, and all the earth,)
Joys of the life befitting me and brothers mine,
Our time, our term has come.*

*Nor yield we mournfully majestic brothers,
We who have grandly fill'd our time ;
With Nature's calm content, with tacit huge delight,
We welcome what we wrought for through the past,
And leave the field for them.*

*For them predicted long,
For a superb race, they too to grandly fill their time,
For them we abdicate, in them ourselves ye forest kings !
In them these skies and airs, these mountain peaks,
Shasta, Nevadas,
These huge precipitous cliffs, this amplitude, these valleys,
far Yosemite,
To be in them absorb'd, assimilated.*

*Then to a loftier strain,
Still prouder, more ecstatic rose the chant,
As if the heirs, the deities of the West,
Joining with master-tongue bore part.*

*Not wan from Asia's fetiches,
Nor red from Europe's old dynastic slaughter-house
(Arca of murder-plots of thrones, with scent left yet of
wars and scaffolds everywhere,)*

*But come from Nature's long and harmless throes, peacefully builded thence,
These virgin lands, lands of the Western shore,
To the new culminating man, to you, the empire new,
You promis'd long, we pledge, we dedicate.*

*You occult deep volitions,
You average spiritual manhood, purpose of all, pois'd on
yourself, giving not taking law,
You womanhood divine, mistress and source of all, whence
life and love and ought that comes from life and love,
You unscen moral essence of all the vast materials of
America, (age upon age working in death the same
as life,)
You that, sometimes known, oftener unknown, really
shape and mould the New World, adjusting it to
Time and Space,
You hidden national will lying in your abysses, conceal'd
but ever alert,
You past and present purposes tenaciously pursued,
may-be unconscious of yourselves,
Unswerv'd by all the passing errors, perturbations of the
surface ;
You vital, universal, deathless germs, beneath all creeds,
arts, statutes, literatures,
Here build your homes for good, establish here, these
areas entire, lands of the Western shore,
We pledge, we dedicate to you.*

*For man of you, your characteristic race,
Here may he hardy, sweet, gigantic grow, here tower
proportionate to Nature,
Here climb the vast pure spaces unconfined, uncheck'd by
wall or roof.*

*Here laugh with storm or sun, here joy, here patiently
inure,
Here heed himself, unfold himself, (not others' formulas
heed,) here fill his time,
To duly fall, to aid, unreck'd at last,
To disappear, to serve.*

Thus on the northern coast,
In the echo of teamsters' calls and the clinking chains,
and the music of choppers' axes,
The falling trunk and limbs, the crash, the muffled
shriek, the groan,
Such words combined from the redwood-tree, as of
voices ecstatic, ancient and rustling,
The century-lasting, unseen dryads, singing, with-
drawing,
All their recesses of forests and mountains leaving,
From the Cascade range to the Wahsatch, or Idaho far,
or Utah,
To the deities of the modern henceforth yielding,
The chorus and indications, the vistas of coming
humanity, the settlements, features all,
In the Mendocino woods I caught.

2.

The flashing and golden pageant of California,
The sudden and gorgeous drama, the sunny and ample
lands,
The long and varied stretch from Puget sound to
Colorado south,
Lands bathed in sweeter, rarer, healthier air, valleys and
mountain cliffs,
The fields of Nature long prepared and fallow, the silent,
cyclic chemistry,

The slow and steady ages plodding, the unoccupied surface ripening, the rich ores forming beneath ;
At last the New arriving, assuming, taking possession,
A swarming and busy race settling and organising everywhere,
Ships coming in from the whole round world, and going out to the whole world,
To India and China and Australia and the thousand island paradises of the Pacific,
Populous cities, the latest inventions, the steamers on the rivers, the railroads, with many a thrifty farm, with machinery,
And wool and wheat and the grape, and diggings of yellow gold.

3.

But more in you than these, lands of the Western shore,
(These but the means, the implements, the standing-ground,)
I see in you, certain to come, the promise of thousands of years, till now deferr'd,
Promis'd to be fulfill'd, our common kind, the race.

The new society at last, proportionate to Nature,
In man of you, more than your mountains peaks or stalwart trees imperial,
In woman more, far more, than all your gold or vines, or even vital air.

Fresh come, to a new world indeed, yet long prepared,
I see the genius of the modern, child of the real and ideal,
Clearing the ground for broad humanity, the true America, heir of the past so grand,
To build a grander future.

YOUTH, DAY, OLD AGE AND NIGHT.

YOUTH, large, lusty, loving—youth full of grace, force,
fascination,

Do you know that Old Age may come after you with
equal grace, force, fascination?

Day full-blown and splendid—day of the immense sun,
action, ambition, laughter,

The Night follows close with millions of suns, and sleep
and restoring darkness.





BIRDS OF PASSAGE.

SONG OF THE UNIVERSAL.

1.

COME said the Muse,
Sing me a song no poet yet has chanted,
Sing me the universal.

In this broad earth of ours,
Amid the measureless grossness and the slag,
Enclosed and safe within its central heart,
Nestles the seed perfection.

By every life a share or more or less,
None born but it is born, conceal'd or unconceal'd the
seed is waiting.

2.

Lo ! keen-eyed towering science,
As from tall peaks the modern overlooking,
Successive absolute fiats issuing.

Yet again, lo ! the soul, above all science,
For it has history gather'd like husks around the globe,
For it the entire star-myriads roll through the sky.

In spiral routes by long detours,
(As a much-tacking ship upon the sea,)
For it the partial to the permanent flowing,
For it the real to the ideal tends.

For it the mystic evolution,
Not the right only justified, what we call evil also
justified.

Forth from their masks, no matter what,
From the huge festering trunk, from craft and guile and
tears,
Health to emerge and joy, joy universal.

Out of the bulk, the morbid and the shallow,
Out of the bad majority, the varied countless frauds of
men and states,
Electric, antiseptic yet, cleaving, suffusing all,
Only the good is universal.

3.

Over the mountain-growths disease and sorrow,
An uncaught bird is ever hovering, hovering,
High in the purer, happier air.

From imperfection's murkiest cloud,
Darts always forth one ray of perfect light,
One flash of heaven's glory.

To fashion's, custom's discord,
To the mad Babel-din, the deafening orgies,
Soothing each lull a strain is heard, just heard,
From some far shore the final chorus sounding.

O the blest eyes, the happy hearts,
That see, that know the guiding thread so fine,
Along the mighty labyrinth.

4.

And thou America,
For the scheme's culmination, its thought and its reality,
For these (not for thyself) thou hast arrived.

Thou too surroundest all,
Embracing carrying welcoming all, thou too by path-
ways broad and new,
To the ideal tendest.

The measur'd faiths of other lands, the grandeurs of the
past,
Are not for thee, but grandeurs of thine own,
Deific faiths and amplitudes, absorbing, comprehending
all,
All eligible to all.

All, all for immortality,
Love like the light silently wrapping all,
Nature's amelioration blessing all,
The blossoms, fruits of ages, orchards divine and certain,
Forms, objects, growths, humanities, to spiritual images
ripening.

Give me O God to sing that thought,
Give me, give him or her I love this quenchless faith,
In Thy ensemble, whatever else withheld withhold not
from us,
Belief in plan of Thee enclosed in Time and Space,
Health, peace, salvation universal.

Is it a dream?
Nay but the lack of it the dream,
And failing it life's lore and wealth a dream,
And all the world a dream.

PIONEERS! O PIONEERS!

COME my tan-faced children,
Follow well in order, get your weapons ready,
Have you your pistols? have you your sharp-edged
axes?

Pioneers! O pioneers!

For we cannot tarry here,
We must march my darlings, we must bear the brunt of
danger,
We the youthful sinewy races, all the rest on us depend,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O you youths, Western youths,
So impatient, full of action, full of manly pride and
friendship,
Plain I see you Western youths, see you trampling with
the foremost,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Have the elder races halted?
Do they droop and end their lesson, wearied over there
beyond the seas?
We take up the task eternal, and the burden and the
lesson,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the past we leave behind,
We debouch upon a newer mightier world, varied world,
Fresh and strong the world we seize, world of labour
and the march,
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

We detachments steady throwing,
Down the edges, through the passes, up the mountains
steep,
Conquering, holding, daring, venturing as we go the
unknown ways,
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

We primeval forests felling,
We the rivers stemming, vexing we and piercing deep
the mines within,
We the surface broad surveying, we the virgin soil
upheaving,
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

Colorado men are we,
From the peaks gigantic, from the great sierras and the
high plateaus,
From the mine and from the gully, from the hunting
trail we come,
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

From Nebraska, from Arkansas,
Central inland race are we, from Missouri, with the
continental blood intervein'd,
All the hands of comrades clasping, all the Southern, all
the Northern,
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

O resistless restless race !
O beloved race in all ! O my breast aches with tender
love for all !
O I mourn and yet exult, I am wrapt with love for all,
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

Raise the mighty mother mistress,
Waving high the delicate mistress, over all the starry
mistress (bend your heads all),
Raise the fang'd and warlike mistress, stern, impassive,
weaponed mistress,
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

See my children, resolute children,
By those swarms upon our rear we must never yield or
falter,
Ages back in ghostly millions frowning there behind us
urging,
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

On and on the compact ranks,
With accessions ever waiting, with the places of the
dead quickly fill'd,
Through the battle, through defeat, moving yet and
never stopping.
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

O to die advancing on !
Are there some of us to droop and die ? has the hour
come ?
Then upon the march we fittest die, soon and sure the
gap is fill'd,
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

All the pulses of the world,
Falling in they beat for us, with the Western movement
beat,
Holding single or together, steady moving to the front,
all for us,
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

Life's involv'd and varied pageants,
All the forms and shows, all the workmen at their work,
All the seamen and the landsmen, all the masters with
their slaves,
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

All the hapless silent lovers,
All the prisoners in the prisons, all the righteous and
the wicked,
All the joyous, all the sorrowing, all the living, all the
dying,
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

I too with my soul and body,
We, a curious trio, picking, wandering on our way,
Through these shores amid the shadows, with the
apparitions pressing,
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

Lo, the darting bowling orb !
Lo, the brother orbs around, all the clustering sons and
planets,
All the dazzling days, all the mystic nights with dreams,
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

These are of us, they are with us,
All for primal needed work, while the followers there in
embryo wait behind,

We to-day's procession heading, we the route for travel
clearing,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

O you daughters of the West!

O you young and elder daughters! O you mothers and
you wives!

Never must you be divided, in our ranks you move
united,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

Minstrels latent on the prairies!

(Shrouded bards of other lands, you may rest, you have
done your work,)

Soon I hear you coming warbling, soon you rise and
tramp amid us,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

Not for delectations sweet,

Not the cushion and the slipper, not the peaceful and
the studious,

Not the riches safe and palling, not for us the tame
enjoyment,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

Do the feasters gluttonous feast?

Do the corpulent sleepers sleep? have they lock'd and
bolted doors?

Still be ours the diet hard, and the blanket on the
ground,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

Has the night descended?

Was the road of late so toilsome, did we stop discouraged
nodding on our way?

Yet a passing hour I yield you in your tracks to pause
oblivious,

Pioneers ! O pioneers !

Still with sound of trumpet,
Far, far off the daybreak call—hark ! how loud and
clear I hear it wind, [your places,
Swift ! to the head of the army !—swift ! spring to
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

TO YOU.

WHOEVER you are, I fear you are walking the walk
of dreams, [your feet and hands,
I fear these supposed realities are to melt from under
Even now your features, joys, speech, house, trade,
manners, troubles, follies, costume, crimes, dis-
sipate away from you,
Your true soul and body appear before me,
They stand forth out of affairs, out of eommerce, shops,
work, farms, clothes, the house, buying, selling,
eating, drinking, suffering, dying.

Whoever you are, now I place my hand upon you, that
you be my poem,
I whisper with my lips close to your ear,
I have loved many women and men, but I love none
better than you.

O I have been dilatory and dumb,
I should have made my way straight to you long ago,
I should have blabb'd nothing but you, I should have
chanted nothing but you.

I will leave all and come and make the hymns of you,
 None has understood you, but I understand you,
 None has done justice to you, you have not done justice
 to yourself,
 None but has found you imperfect, I only find no
 imperfection in you,
 None but would subordinate you, I only am he who
 will never consent to subordinate you,
 I only am he who places over you no master, owner,
 better, God, beyond what waits intrinsically in
 yourself.

Painters have painted their swarming groups and the
 centre-figure of all,
 From the head of the centre-figure spreading a nimbus
 of gold-colour'd light,
 But I paint myriads of heads, but paint no head without
 its nimbus of gold-colour'd light,
 From my hand from the brain of every man and woman
 it streams, effulgently flowing forever.

O I could sing such grandeurs and glories about you !
 You have not known what you are, you have slumber'd
 upon yourself all your life, [time,
 Your eyelids have been the same as closed most of the
 What you have done returns already in mockeries,
 (Your thrift, knowledge, prayers, if they do not return
 in mockeries, what is their return ?)

The mockeries are not you,
 Underneath them and within them I see you lurk,
 ' pursue you where none else has pursued you,
 silence, the desk, the flippant expression, the night, the
 accustom'd routine, if these conceal you from others
 or from yourself, they do not conceal you from me,

The shaved face, the unsteady eye, the impure complexion, if these balk others they do not balk me,
The pert apparel, the deform'd attitude, drunkenness, greed, premature death, all these I part aside.

There is no endowment in man or woman that is not tallied in you, [good is in you,
There is no virtue, no beauty in man or woman, but as No pluck, no endurance in others, but as good is in you,
No pleasure waiting for others, but an equal pleasure waits for you.

As for me, I give nothing to any one except I give the like carefully to you,
I sing the songs of the glory of none, not God, sooner than I sing the songs of the glory of you.

Whoever you are ! claim your own at any hazard ! [you,
These shows of the East and West are tame compared to These immense meadows, these interminable rivers, you are immense and interminable as they,
These furies, elements, storms, motions of Nature, throes of apparent dissolution, you are he or she who is master or mistress over them,
Master or mistress in your own right over Nature, elements, pain, passion, dissolution.

The hopples fall from your ankles, you find an unfailing sufficiency,
Old or young, male or female, rude, low, rejected by the rest, whatever you are promulges itself,
Through birth, life, death, burial, the means are provided, nothing is scanted,
Through angers, losses, ambition, ignorance, ennui, what you are picks its way.

FRANCE,

The 18th Year of the United States.

A GREAT year and place,
A harsh discordant natal scream out-sounding, to touch
the mother's heart closer than any yet.

I walk'd the shores of my Eastern sea,
Heard over the waves the little voice,
Saw the divine infant where she woke mournfully wailing,
amid the roar of cannon, curses, shouts, crash of
falling buildings,
Was not so sick from the blood in the gutters running,
nor from the single corpses, nor those in heaps, nor
those borne away in the tumbrils,
Was not so desperate at the battues of death—was not so
shock'd at the repeated fusillades of the guns.

Pale, silent, stern, what could I say to that long-accrued
retribution?
Could I wish humanity different?
Could I wish the people made of wood and stone?
Or that there be no justice in destiny or time?

O Liberty! O mate for me!
Here too the blaze, the grape-shot and the axe, in
reserve, to fetch them out in case of need,
Here too, though long repress'd, can never be destroy'd,
Here too could rise at last murdering and ecstatic,
Here too demanding full arrears of vengeance.

Hence I sign this salute over the sea,
And I do not deny that terrible red birth and baptism,

But remember the little voice that I heard wailing, and
wait with perfect trust, no matter how long,
And from to-day sad and cogent I maintain the
bequeath'd cause, as for all lands,
And I send these words to Paris with my love,
And I guess some chansonniers there will understand
them,
For I guess there is latent music yet in France, floods
of it,
O I hear already the bustle of instruments, they will
soon be drowning all that would interrupt them,
O I think the east wind brings a triumphal and free
march,
It reaches hither, it swells me to joyful madness,
I will run transpose it in words, to justify it,
I will yet sing a song for you ma femme.

MYSELF AND MINE.

MYSELF and mine gymnastic ever,
To stand the cold or heat, to take good aim with a gun,
to sail a boat, to manage horses, to beget superb
children,
To speak readily and clearly, to feel at home among
common people,
And to hold our own in terrible positions on land and
sea.

Not for an embroiderer,
(There will always be plenty of embroiderers, I welcome
them also),
But for the fibre of things and for inherent men and
women.

Nor to chisel ornaments,
But to chisel with free stroke the heads and limbs of
plenteous supreme Gods, that the States may realise
them walking and talking.

Let me have my own way,
Let others promulge the laws, I will make no account of
the laws,
Let others praise eminent men and hold up peace, I hold
up agitation and conflict,
I praise no eminent man, I rebuke to his face the one
that was thought most worthy.

(Who are you? and what are you secretly guilty of all
your life?
Will you turn aside all your life? will you grub and
chatter all your life?
And who are you, blabbing by rote, years, pages,
languages, reminiscences,
Unwitting to-day that you do not know how to speak
properly a single word?)

Let others finish specimens, I never finish specimens,
I start them by exhaustless laws as Nature does, fresh
and modern continually.

I give nothing as duties,
What others give as duties I give as living impulses,
(Shall I give the heart's action as a duty?)

Let others dispose of questions, I dispose of nothing, I
arouse unanswerable questions,
Who are they I see and touch, and what about them?
What about these likes of myself that draw me so close
by tender directions and indirections?

I call to the world to distrust the accounts of my friends,
 but listen to my enemies, as I myself do,
 I charge you forever reject those who would expound
 me, for I cannot expound myself,
 I charge that there be no theory or school founded out
 of me,
 I charge you to leave all free, as I have left all free.

After me, vista !
 O I see life is not short, but immeasurably long,
 I henceforth tread the world chaste, temperate, an early
 riser, a steady grower,
 Every hour the semen of centuries, and still of centuries.
 I must follow up these continual lessons of the air,
 water, earth,
 I perceive I have no time to lose.

WITH ANTECEDENTS.

WITH antecedents,
 With my fathers and mothers and the accumulations of
 past ages,
 With all which, had it not been, I would not now be
 here, as I am,
 With Egypt, India, Phenicia, Greece and Rome,
 With the Kelt, the Scandinavian, the Alb and the
 Saxon, [and journeys,
 With antique maritime ventures, laws, artisanship, wars
 With the poet, the skald, the saga, the myth, and the
 oracle,
 With the sale of slaves, with enthusiasts, with the
 troubadour, the crusader, and the monk,

With those old continents whence we have come to this
 new continent,
 With the fading kingdoms and kings over there,
 With the fading religions and priests,
 With the small shores we look back to from our own
 large and present shores,
 With countless years drawing themselves onward and
 arrived at these years, [year,
 You and me arrived—America arrived and making this
 This year! sending itself ahead countless years to come.

2.

O but it is not the years—it is I, it is you,
 We touch all laws and tally all antecedents,
 We are the skald, the oracle, the monk and the knight,
 we easily include them and more,
 We stand amid time beginningless and endless, we stand
 amid evil and good,
 All swings around us, there is as much darkness as light,
 The very sun swings itself and its system of planets
 around us,
 Its sun, and its again, all swing around us.

As for me, (torn, stormy, amid these vehement days,)
 I have the idea of all, and am all and believe in all,
 I believe materialism is true and spiritualism it true, I
 reject no part.

(Have I forgotten any part? any thing in the past?
 Come to me whoever and whatever, till I give you
 recognition.)

I respect Assyria, China, Teutonia, and the Hebrews,
 I adopt each theory, myth, god and demi-god,

I see that the old accounts, Bibles, genealogies, are true,
without exception,
I assert that all past days were what they must have
been,
And that they could no-how have been better than they
were,
And that to-day is what it must be, and that America is,
And that to-day and America could no-how be better
than they are.

3.

In the name of these States and in your and my name,
the Past,
And in the name of these States and in your and my
name, the Present time.

I know that the past was great and the future will be
great,
And I know that both curiously conjoint in the present
time,
(For the sake of him I typify, for the common average
man's sake, your sake if you are he,)
And that where I am or you are this present day, there
is the centre of all days, all races,
And there is the meaning to us of all that has ever come
of races and days, or ever will come.





SEA-DRIFT.

OUT OF THE CRADLE ENDLESSLY ROCKING.

Out of the cradle endlessly rocking,
Out of the mocking-bird's throat, the musical shuttle,
Out of the Ninth-month midnight,
Over the sterile sands and the fields beyond, where the
child leaving his bed wander'd alone, bareheaded,
barefoot,
Down from the shower'd halo,
Up from the mystic play of shadows twining and
twisting as if they were alive,
Out from the patches of briers and blackberries,
From the memories of the bird that chanted to me,
From your memories sad brother, from the fitful risings
and fallings I heard,
From under that yellow half-moon late-risen and swollen
as if with tears,
From those beginning notes of yearning and love there
in the mist,
From the thousand responses of my heart never to cease,
From the myriad thence-arous'd words,
From the word stronger and more delicious than any,
From such as now they start the scene revisiting,
As a flock, twittering, rising, or overhead passing,

Borne hither, ere all eludes me, hurriedly,
A man, yet by these tears a little boy again,
Throwing myself on the sand, confronting the waves,
I, chanter of pains and joys, uniter of here and hereafter,
Taking all hints to use them, but swiftly leaping beyond
 them,
A reminiscence sing.

Once Paumanok,
When the lilac-scent was in the air and Fifth-month
 grass was growing,
Up this sea-shore in some briers,
Two feather'd guests from Alabama, two together,
And their nest, and four light-green eggs spotted with
 brown,
And every day the he-bird to and fro near at hand,
And every day the she-bird crouch'd on her nest, silent,
 with bright eyes,
And every day I, a curious boy, never too close, never
 disturbing them,
Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating.

*Shine ! shine ! shine !
Pour down your warmth, great sun !
While we bask, we two together.*

*Two together !
Winds blow south, or winds blow north,
Day come white, or night come black,
Home, or rivers and mountains from home,
Singing all time, minding no time,
While we two keep together.*

Till of a sudden,
May-be kill'd, unknown to her mate,
One forenoon the she-bird crouch'd not on the nest,

Nor return'd that afternoon, nor the next,
Nor ever appear'd again.

And thenceforward all summer in the sound of the sea,
And at night under the full of the moon in calmer
weather,

Over the hoarse surging of the sea,
Or flitting from brier to brier by day, [he-bird,
I saw, I heard at intervals the remaining one, the
The solitary guest from Alabama.

Blow ! blow ! blow !

Blow up sea-winds along Paumanok's shore ;

I wait and I wait till you blow my mate to me.

Yes, when the stars glisten'd,
All night long on the prong of a moss-scallop'd stake,
Down almost amid the slapping waves,
Sat the lone singer wonderful causing tears.

He call'd on his mate,
He pour'd forth the meanings which I of all men know.

Yes my brother I know,
The rest might not, but I have treasur'd every note,
For more than once dimly down to the beach gliding,
Silent, avoiding the moonbeam, blending myself with
the shadows.

Recalling now the obscure shapes, the echoes, the sounds
and sights after their sorts,
The white arms out in the breakers tirelessly tossing,
I, with bare feet, a child, the wind wafting my hair,
Listen'd long and long.

Listen'd to keep, to sing, now translating the notes,
Following you my brother.

Soothe ! soothe ! soothe !

*Close on its wave soothes the waves behind, [one close,
And again another behind embracing and lapping, every
But my love soothes not me, not me.*

Low hangs the moon, it rose late,

It is lagging—O I think it is heavy with love, with love.

*O madly the sea pushes upon the land,
With love, with love.*

*O night ! do I not see my love fluttering out among the
breakers !*

What is that little black thing I see there in the white ?

Loud ! loud ! loud !

Loud I call to you, my love !

*High and clear I shoot my voice over the waves,
Surely you must know who is here, is here,
You must know who I am, my love.*

Low-hanging moon !

What is that dusky spot in your brown yellow !

O it is the shape, the shape of my mate !

O moon do not keep her from me any longer.

Land ! land ! O land !

*Whichever way I turn, O I think you could give me my
mate back again if you only would,*

*For I am almost sure I see her dimly whichever way I
look.*

O rising stars !

*Perhaps the one I want so much will rise, will rise with
some of you.*

*O throat ! O trembling throat !
Sound clearer through the atmosphere !
Pierce the woods, the earth,
Somewhere listening to catch you must be the one I want.*

*Shake out carols !
Solitary here, the night's carols !
Carols of lonesome love ! death's carols !
Carols under that lagging, yellow, waning moon !
O under that moon where she droops almost down into the
 sea !
O reckless despairing carols.*

*But soft ! sink low !
Soft ! let me just murmur,
And do you wait a moment you husky-nois'd sea,
For somewhere I believe I heard my mate responding to
 me,
So faint, I must be still, be still to listen,
But not altogether still, for then she might not come
 immediately to me.*

*Hither my love !
Here I am ! here !
With this just-sustain'd note I announce myself to you,
This gentle call is for you my love, for you.*

*Do not be decoy'd elsewhere,
That is the whistle of the wind, it is not my voice,
That is the fluttering, the fluttering of the spray,
Those are the shadows of leaves.*

*O darkness ! O in vain !
I am very sick and sorrowful.*

*O brown halo in the sky near the moon, drooping upon
the sea !*

O troubled reflection in the sea !

O throat ! O throbbing heart !

And I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night.

O past ! O happy life ! O songs of joy !

In the air, in the woods, over fields,

Loved ! loved ! loved ! loved ! loved !

But my mate no more, no more with me !

We two together no more.

The aria sinking,

All else continuing, the stars shining,

The winds blowing, the notes of the bird continuous
echoing,

With angry moans the fierce old mother incessantly
moaning,

On the sands of Paumanok's shore grey and rustling,

The yellow half-moon enlarged, sagging down, drooping,
the face of the sea almost touching,

The boy ecstatic, with his bare feet the waves, with his
hair the atmosphere dallying,

The love in the heart long pent, now loose, now at last
tumultuously bursting,

The aria's meaning, the ears, the soul, swiftly depositing,

The strange tears down the cheeks coursing,

The colloquy there, the trio, each uttering,

The undertone, the savage old mother incessantly crying,

To the boy's soul's questions sullenly timing, some
drown'd secret hissing,

To the outsetting bard.

Demon or bird ! (said the boy's soul,)

Is it indeed toward your mate you sing ? or is it really
to me ?

For I, that was a child, my tongue's use sleeping, now I
have heard you,
Now in a moment I know what I am for, I awake,
And already a thousand singers, a thousand songs,
clearer, louder, and more sorrowful than yours,
A thousand warbling echoes have started the life within
me, never to die.

O you singer solitary, singing by yourself, projecting me,
O solitary me listening, never more shall I cease
perpetuating you,
Never more shall I escape, never more the reverberations,
Never more the cries of unsatisfied love be absent from
me,
Never again leave me to be the peaceful child I was
before what there in the night,
By the sea under the yellow and sagging moon,
The messenger there arous'd, the fire, the sweet hell
within,
The unknown want, the destiny of me.

O give me the clew! (it lurks in the night here
somewhere,)
O if I am to have so much, let me have more!

A word then, (for I will conquer it,)
The word final, superior to all,
Subtle, sent up—what is it?—I listen; [sea-waves?
Are you whispering it, and have been all the time, you
Is that it from your liquid rims and wet sands?

Whereto answering, the sea,
Delaying not, hurrying not,
Whisper'd me through the night, and very plainly
before daybreak,

Lisp'd to me the low and delicious word death,
And again death, death, death, death,
Hissing melodious, neither like the bird nor like my
 arous'd child's heart,
But edging near as privately for me rustling at my feet,
Creeping thence steadily up to my ears and laving me
 softly all over,
Death, death, death, death, death.

Which I do not forget,
But fuse the song of my dusky demon and brother,
That he sang to me in the moonlight on Paumanok's
 grey beach,
With the thousand responsive songs at random,
My own songs awaked from that hour,
And with them the key, the word up from the waves,
The word of the sweetest song and all songs,
That strong and delicious word which, creeping to my
 feet,
(Or like some old crone rocking the cradle, swathed in
 sweet garments, bending aside,)
The sea whisper'd me.

AS I EBB'D WITH THE OCEAN OF LIFE.

1.

As I ebb'd with the ocean of life,
As I wended the shores I know,
As I walk'd where the ripples continually wash you
 Paumanok,
Where they rustle up hoarse and sibilant,
Where the fierce old mother endlessly cries for her
 castaways,

I musing late in the autumn day, gazing off southward,
Held by this electric self out of the pride of which I
utter poems,
Was seiz'd by the spirit that trails in the lines underfoot,
The rim, the sediment that stands for all the water and
all the land of the globe.

Fascinated, my eyes reverting from the south, dropt, to
follow those slender windrows,
Chaff, straw, splinters of wood, weeds, and the sea-gluten,
Scum, scales from shining rocks, leaves of salt-lettuce,
left by the tide,
Miles walking, the sound of breaking waves the other
side of me,
Paumanok there and then as I thought the old thought
of likenesses,
These you presented to me you fish-shaped island,
As I wended the shores I know,
As I walk'd with that electric self seeking types.

2.

As I wend to the shores I know not,
As I list to the dirge, the voices of men and women
wreck'd,
As I inhale the impalpable breezes that set in upon me,
As the ocean so mysterious rolls toward me closer and
closer,
I too but signify at the utmost a little wash'd-up drift,
A few sands and dead leaves to gather,
Gather, and merge myself as part of the sands and drift.

O baffled, balk'd, bent to the very earth,
Oppress'd with myself that I have dared to open my
mouth,

Aware now that amid all that blab whose echoes recoil
upon me I have not once had the least idea who or
what I am,
But that before all my arrogant poems the real Me stands
yet untouch'd, untold, altogether unreach'd,
Withdrawn far, mocking me with mock-congratulatory
signs and bows, [have written,
With peals of distant ironical laughter at every word I
Pointing in silence to these songs, and then to the sand
beneath.

I perceive I have not really understood any thing, not a
single object, and that no man ever can,
Nature here in sight of the sea taking advantage of me
to dart upon me and sting me,
Because I have dared to open my mouth to sing at all.

3.

You oceans both, I close with you,
We murmur alike reproachfully rolling sands and drift,
knowing not why,
These little shreds indeed standing for you and me and
all.

You friable shore with trails of debris,
You fish-shaped island, I take what is underfoot,
What is yours is mine my father.

I too Paumanok,
I too have bubbled up, floated the measureless float,
and been wash'd on your shores,
I too am but a trail of drift and debris,
I too leave little wrecks upon you, you fish-shaped
island.

I throw myself upon your breast my father,
I cling to you so that you cannot unloose me,
I hold you so firm till you answer me something.

Kiss me my father,
Touch me with your lips as I touch those I love,
Breathe to me while I hold you close the secret of the
murmuring I envy.

4.

Ebb, ocean of life, (the flow will return,)
Cease not your meaning you fierce old mother,
Endlessly cry for your castaways, but fear not, deny not
me,
Rustle not up so hoarse and angry against my feet as I
touch you or gather from you.

I mean tenderly by you and all,
I gather for myself and for this phantom looking down
where we lead, and following me and mine.

Me and mine, loose windrows, little corpses,
Froth, snowy white, and bubbles,
(See, from my dead lips the ooze exuding at last,
See, the prismatic colours glistening and rolling,)
Tufts of straw, sands, fragments,
Buoy'd hither from many moods, one contradicting
another,
From the storm, the long calm, the darkness, the swell,
Musing, pondering, a breath, a briny tear, a dab of
liquid or soil,
Up just as much out of fathomless workings fermented
and thrown,
A limp blossom or two, torn, just as much over waves
floating, drifted at random,

Just as much for us that sobbing dirge of Nature,
Just as much whence we come that blare of the cloud-
trumpets,
We, capricious, brought hither we know not whence,
spread out before you,
You up there walking or sitting,
Whoever you are, we too lie in drifts at your feet.

TO THE MAN-OF-WAR-BIRD.

THOU who hast slept all night upon the storm,
Waking renew'd on thy prodigious pinions,
(Burst the wild storm ! above it thou ascended'st,
And rested on the sky, thy slave that cradled thee,)
Now a blue point, far, far in heaven floating,
As to the light emerging here on deck I watch thee,
(Myself a speck, a point on the world's floating vast.)

Far, far at sea,
After the night's fierce drifts have strewn the shore with
wrecks,
With reappearing day as now so happy and serene,
The rosy and elastic dawn, the flashing sun,
The limpid spread of air cerulean,
Thou also reappearest.

Thou born to match the gale (thou art all wings),
To cope with heaven and earth and sea and hurricane,
Thou ship of air that never furl'st thy sails,
Days, even weeks untired and onward, through spaces,
realms gyrating,
At dusk that look'st on Senegal, at morn America,

That sport'st amid the lightning-flash and thunder-
cloud,
In them, in thy experiences, had'st thou my soul,
What joys ! what joys were thine !

ABOARD AT A SHIP'S HELM.

ABOARD at a ship's helm,
A young steersman steering with care.

Through fog on a sea-coast dolefully ringing,
An ocean-bell—O a warning bell, rock'd by the waves.

O you give good notice indeed, you bell by the sea-reefs
ringing,
Ringing, ringing, to warn the ship from its wreck-place.

For as on the alert O steersman, you mind the loud
admonition,
The bows turn, the freighted ship tacking speeds away
under her grey sails,
The beautiful and noble ship with all her precious
wealth speeds away gaily and safe.

But O the ship, the immortal ship ! O ship aboard the
ship !
Ship of the body, ship of the soul, voyaging, voyaging,
voyaging !

ON THE BEACH AT NIGHT.

ON the beach at night,
Stands a child with her father,
Watching the east, the autumn sky.

Up through the darkness,
While ravening clouds, the burial clouds, in black
masses spreading,
Lower sullen and fast athwart and down the sky,
Amid a transparent clear belt of ether yet left in the
east,
Ascends large and calm the lord-star Jupiter,
And nigh at hand, only a very little above,
Swim the delicate sisters the Pleiades.

From the beach the child holding the hand of her father,
Those burial-clouds that lower victorious soon to devour
all,
Watching, silently weeps.

Weep not, child,
Weep not, my darling,
With these kisses let me remove your tears,
The ravening clouds shall not long be victorious,
They shall not long possess the sky, they devour the
stars only in apparition,
Jupiter shall emerge, be patient, watch again another
night, the Pleiades shall emerge,
They are immortal, all those stars both silvery and
golden shall shine out again,
The great stars and the little ones shall shine out again,
they endure,
The vast immortal suns and the long-enduring pensive
moons shall again shine.

Then dearest child mournest thou only for Jupiter?
Considerest thou alone the burial of the stars?

Something there is,
(With my lips soothing thee, adding I whisper,
I give thee the first suggestion, the problem and indirection),

Something there is more immortal even than the stars,
(Many the burials, many the days and nights, passing
away), [Jupiter,

Something that shall endure longer even than lustrous
longer than sun or any revolving satellite,
Or the radiant sisters the Pleiades.

THE WORLD BELOW THE BRINE.

THE world below the brine,
Forests at the bottom of the sea, the branches and leaves,
Sea-lettuce, vast lichens, strange flowers and seeds, the
thick tangle, openings, and pink turf,
Different colours, pale grey and green, purple, white,
and gold, the play of light through the water,
Dumb swimmers there among the rocks, coral, gluten,
grass, rushes, and the aliment of the swimmers,
Sluggish existences grazing there suspended, or slowly
crawling close to the bottom,
The sperm-whale at the surface blowing air and spray, or
disporting with his flukes,
The leaden-eyed shark, the walrus, the turtle, the hairy
sea-leopard, and the sting-ray,
Passions there, wars, pursuits, tribes, sight in those
ocean-depths, breathing that thick-breathing air, as
so many do,

The change thence to the sight here, and to the subtle
air breathed by beings like us who walk this sphere,
The change onward from ours to that of beings who walk
other spheres.

ON THE BEACH AT NIGHT ALONE.

ON the beach at night alone,
As the old mother sways her to and fro singing her
husky song,
As I watch the bright stars shining, I think a thought
of the clef of the universes and of the future.

A vast similitude interlocks all,
All spheres, grown, ungrown, small, large, suns, moons,
planets,
All distances of place however wide,
All distances of time, all inanimate forms,
All souls, all living bodies though they be ever so
different, or in different worlds,
All gaseous, watery, vegetable, mineral processes, the
fishes, the brutes,
All nations, colours, barbarisms, civilisations, languages,
All identities that have existed or may exist on this
globe, or any globe,
All lives and deaths, all of the past, present, future,
This vast similitude spans them, and always has spann'd,
And shall forever span them and compactly hold and
enclose them.

SONG FOR ALL SEAS, ALL SHIPS.

1.

TO-DAY a rude brief recitative,
Of ships sailing the seas, each with its special flag or
ship-signal,
Of unnamed heroes in the ships—of waves spreading and
spreading far as the eye can reach,
Of dashing spray, and the winds piping and blowing,
And out of these a chant for the sailors of all nations,
Fitful, like a surge.

Of sea-captains young or old, and the mates, and of all
intrepid sailors,
Of the few, very choice, taciturn, whom fate can never
surprise nor death dismay, [by thee,
Pick'd sparingly without noise by thee old ocean, chosen
Thou sea that pickest and cullest the race in time, and
unitest nations,
Suckled by thee, old husky nurse, embodying thee,
Indomitable, untamed as thee.

(Ever the heroes on water or on land, by ones or twos
appearing,
Ever the stock preserved and never lost, though rare,
enough for seed preserv'd.)

2.

Flaunt out O sea your separate flags of nations !
Flaunt out visible as ever the various ship-signals !
But do you reserve especially for yourself and for the
soul of man one flag above all the rest,
A spiritual woven signal for all nations, emblem of man
elate above death,

Token of all brave captains and all intrepid sailors and
 mates,
And all that went down doing their duty,
Reminiscent of them, twined from all intrepid captains
 young or old,
A pennant universal, subtly waving all time, o'er all
 brave sailors,
All seas, all ships.

PATROLLING BARNEGAT.

WILD, wild the storm, and the sea high running,
Steady the roar of the gale, with incessant undertone
 muttering,
Shouts of demoniac laughter fitfully piercing and pealing,
Waves, air, midnight, their savagest trinity lashing,
Out in the shadows there milk-white combs careering,
On beachy slush and sand spirts of snow fierce slanting,
Where through the murk the easterly death-wind
 breasting,
Through cutting swirl and spray watchful and firm
 advancing,
(That in the distance ! is that a wreck ? is the red signal
 flaring ?)
Slush and sand of the beach tireless till daylight
 wending,
Steadily, slowly, through hoarse roar never remitting,
Along the midnight edge by those milk-white combs
 careering,
A group of dim, weird forms, struggling, the night
 confronting,
That savage trinity warily watching.

AFTER THE SEA-SHIP.

AFTER the sea-ship, after the whistling winds,
After the white-grey sails taut to their spars and ropes,
Below, a myriad myriad waves hastening, lifting up
 their necks,
Tending in ceaseless flow toward the track of the ship,
Waves of the ocean bubbling and gurgling, blithely
 prying,
Waves, undulating waves, liquid, uneven, emulous
 waves,
Toward that whirling current, laughing and buoyant,
 with curves,
Where the great vessel sailing and tacking displaced the
 surface,
Larger and smaller waves in the spread of the ocean
 yearnfully flowing,
The wake of the sea-ship after she passes, flashing and
 frolicsome under the sun,
A motley procession with many a fleck of foam and
 many fragments,
Following the stately and rapid ship, in the wake
 following.





BY THE ROADSIDE.

A BOSTON BALLAD.

(1854.)

To get betimes in Boston town I rose this morning early,
Here's a good place at the corner, I must stand and see
the show.

Clear the way there Jonathan !
Way for the President's marshal—way for the govern-
ment cannon !
Way for the Federal foot and dragoons, (and the
apparitions copiously tumbling.)

I love to look on the Stars and Stripes, I hope the fives
will play Yankee Doodle.

How bright shine the cutlasses of the foremost troops !
Every man holds his revolver, marching stiff through
Boston town.

A fog follows, antiques of the same come limping,
Some appear wooden-legged, and some appear bandaged
and bloodless.

Why this is indeed a show—it has called the dead out of
the earth !

The old graveyards of the hills have hurried to see !
Phantoms ! phantoms countless by flank and rear !
Cock'd hats of mothy mould—crutches made of mist !
Arms in slings—old men leaning on young men's
shoulders.

What troubles you Yankee phantoms ? what is all this
chattering of bare gums ?
Does the ague convulse your limbs ? do you mistake
your crutches for firelocks and level them ?

If you blind your eyes with tears you will not see the
President's marshal,
If you groan such groans you might balk the government
cannon.

For shame old maniacs—bring down those toss'd arms,
and let your white hair be,
Here gape your great-grandsons, their wives gaze at
them from the windows,
See how well dress'd, see how orderly they conduct
themselves.

Worse and worse—can't you stand it ? are you retreating ?
Is this hour with the living too dead for you ?

Retreat then—pell-mell !
To your graves—back—back to the hills old limpers !
I do not think you belong here anyhow.

But there is one thing that belongs here—shall I tell
you what it is, gentlemen of Boston ?

I will whisper it to the Mayor, he shall send a committee
to England,

They shall get a grant from the Parliament, go with a
cart to the royal vault,

Dig out King George's coffin, unwrap him quick from
the grave-clothes, box up his bones for a journey,

Find a swift Yankee clipper—here is freight for you,
black-bellied clipper,

Up with your anchor—shake out your sails—steer
straight toward Boston Bay.

Now call for the President's marshal again, bring out the
government cannon,

Fetch home the roarers from Congress, make another
procession, guard it with foot and dragoons.

This centre-piece for them ;

Look, all orderly citizens—look from the windows,
women ;

The committee open the box, set up the regal ribs, glue
those that will not stay,

Clap the skull on top of the ribs, and clap a crown on
top of the skull.

You have got your revenge, old buster—the crown is
come to its own and more than its own.

Stick your hands in your pockets, Jonathan—you are a
made man from this day,

You are mighty cute—and here is one of your bargains.

EUROPE.

The 72nd and 73rd Years of the United States.

SUDDENLY out of its stale and drowsy lair, the lair of
slaves,
Like lightning it le'pt forth half startled at itself,
Its feet upon the ashes and the rags, its hands tight to
the throats of kings.

O hope and faith !
O aching close of exiled patriots' lives !
O many a sicken'd heart !
Turn back unto this day and make yourselves afresh.

And you, paid to defile the People—you liars, mark !
Not for numberless agonies, murders, lusts,
For court thieving in its manifold mean forms, worming
from his simplicity the poor man's wages,
For many a promise sworn by royal lips and broken and
laugh'd at in the breaking,
Then in their power not for all these did the blows strike
revenge, or the heads of the nobles fall ;
The People scorn'd the ferocity of kings.

But the sweetness of mercy brew'd bitter destruction,
and the frighten'd monarchs come back,
Each comes in state with his train, hangman, priest,
tax-gatherer,
Soldier, lawyer, lord, jailer, and sycophant.

Yet behind all lowering stealing, lo, a shape,
Vague as the night, draped interminably, head, front
and form, in scarlet folds,
Whose face and eyes none may see,

Out of its robes only this, the red robes lifted by the arm,
One finger crook'd pointed high over the top, like the
head of a snake appears.

Meanwhile corpses lie in new-made graves, bloody
corpses of young men,
The rope of the gibbet hangs heavily, the bullets of
princes are flying, the creatures of power laugh
aloud,
And all these things bear fruits, and they are good.

Those corpses of young men,
Those martyrs that hang from the gibbets, those hearts
pierced by the grey lead,
Cold and motionless as they seem live elsewhere with
unslaughtered vitality.

They live in other young men O kings !
They live in brothers again ready to defy you,
They were purified by death, they were taught and
exalted.

Not a grave of the murder'd for freedom but grows seed
for freedom, in its turn to bear seed,
Which the winds carry afar and re-sow, and the rains
and the snows nourish.

Not a disembodied spirit can the weapons of tyrants let
loose,
But it stalks invisibly over the earth, whispering,
counselling, cautioning.

Liberty, let others despair of you—I never despair of
you.

Is the house shut? is the master away?
Nevertheless, be ready, be not weary of watching,
He will soon return, his messengers come anon.

WHEN I HEARD THE LEARN'D ASTRONOMER.

WHEN I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns
before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add,
divide, and measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured
with much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time
Looked up in perfect silence at the stars.

O ME! O LIFE!

O ME! O life! of the questions of these recurring,
Of the endless trains of the faithless, of cities fill'd with
the foolish,
Of myself forever reproaching myself, (for who more
foolish than I, and who more faithless?)
Of eyes that vainly crave the light, of the objects mean,
of the struggle ever renew'd,
Of the poor results of all, of the plodding and sordid
crowds I see around me,

On the empty and endless plains of the West, with the sun
in the distance.

The question, O me, is not returning—What good
shall there be O me O life!

Answer

There you are happy—there the spirit and identity.

There the potential that you are and you may continue
I think.

I SEE AND LOVE YOU.

I see and love you upon all the shores of the world and
upon all the mountains of the world.

I see you upon the plains and upon the rolling hills and upon the
wide mountainous regions of the West.

I see you upon the shores of the world and upon the
wide mountainous regions of the West.

I see you upon the shores of the world and upon the
wide mountainous regions of the West.

I see you upon the shores of the world and upon the
wide mountainous regions of the West.

I see you upon the shores of the world and upon the
wide mountainous regions of the West.

I observe a human as you. I observe the subject matter
and you shall be free to preserve the lives of the
West.

I observe the spirit and the language that by attempts
persons upon discovery, the good, and upon nature,
and the life:

All these—all the mountains and living without and I
seeing and you shall,

See, love, and all shall.

DALLIANCE OF THE EAGLES 141

TO BOTH GIVERS

WHAT YOU GIVE ME I cheerfully accept
A little substance, a hat and garment, a little money, as
I remember with my poems
A traveller's lodging and breakfast as I journey through
the desert—why should I be ashamed to owe such
gifts? why is it a virtue for them
For I myself am not the vast receiver nothing upon earth
and woman
For I know not any man or woman the father or
all the gifts of the universe

THE DALLIANCE OF THE EAGLES

Scouting the river road, my forehead vain my rest
Skyward in air a sudden whirled sound the dalliance of
the eagles
The rushing anonymous combat high in space together
The answering interlocking claws a living nerve
gripping them
Four beating wings two beams a swirling mass tight
grasping
In the long turning clattering loops straight skyward
flaring
Till over the river pools the twin jet out a moment's
fall
A motionless still balance in the air each parting
tail on losing
Upward again or slow firm plummet sinking their
separate diverse flight
She hers he his pursuing

ROAMING IN THOUGHT.

(After reading HEGEL.)

ROAMING in thought over the Universe, I saw the little
that is Good steadily hastening towards immortality,
And the vast all that is call'd Evil I saw hastening to
merge itself and become lost and dead.

A FARM PICTURE.

THROUGH the ample open door of the peaceful country
barn,
A sunlit pasture field with cattle and horses feeding,
And haze and vista, and the far horizon fading away.

A CHILD'S AMAZE.

SILENT and amazed even when a little boy,
I remember I heard the preacher every Sunday put God
in his statements,
As contending against some being or influence.

THE RUNNER.

ON a flat road runs the well-train'd runner,
He is lean and sinewy with muscular legs,
He is thinly clothed, he leans forward as he runs,
With lightly closed fists and arms partially rais'd.

THOUGHT.

OF obedience, faith, adhesiveness ;
As I stand aloof and look there is to me something profoundly affecting in large masses of men following the lead of those who do not believe in men.

THOUGHT.

OF Justice—as if Justice could be any thing but the same ample law, expounded by natural judges and saviours,
As if it might be this thing or that thing, according to decisions.

GLIDING O'ER ALL.

GLIDING o'er all, through all,
Through Nature, Time, and Space,
As a ship on the waters advancing,
The voyage of the soul—not life alone,
Death, many deaths I'll sing.

HAST NEVER COME TO THEE AN HOUR.

HAST never come to thee an hour,
A sudden gleam divine, precipitating, bursting all these bubbles, fashions, wealth ?
These eager business aims—books, politics, art, amours,
To utter nothingness ?

BEAUTIFUL WOMEN.

WOMEN sit or move to and fro, some old, some young,
The young are beautiful—but the old are more beautiful
than the young.

MOTHER AND BABE.

I SEE the sleeping babe nestling the breast of its mother,
The sleeping mother and babe—hush'd, I study them
long and long.

THOUGHT.

OF Equality—as if it harm'd me, giving others the same
chances and rights as myself—as if it were not
indispensable to my own rights that others possess
the same.

TO OLD AGE.

I SEE in you the estuary that enlarges and spreads itself
grandly as it pours in the great sea.





DRUM-TAPS.

FIRST O SONGS FOR A PRELUDE.

FIRST O songs for a prelude,
Lightly strike on the stretch'd tympanum pride and joy
 in my city,
How she led the rest to arms, how she gave the cue,
How at once with lithe limbs unwaiting a moment she
 sprang,
(O Superb! O Manhattan, my own, my peerless!
O strongest you in the hour of danger, in crisis! O truer
 than steel!)
How you sprang—how you threw off the costumes of
 peace with indifferent hand,
How your soft opera-music changed, and the drum and
 fife were heard in their stead,
How you led to the war, (that shall serve for our prelude,
 songs of soldiers,)
How Manhattan drum-taps led.

Forty years had I in my city seen soldiers parading,
Forty years as a pageant, till unawares the lady of this
 teeming and turbulent city,
Sleepless amid her ships, her houses, her incalculable
 wealth,

With her million children around her, suddenly,
At dead of night, at news from the south,
Incens'd struck with clinch'd hand the pavement.

A shock electric, the night sustain'd it,
Till with ominous hum our hive at daybreak pour'd out
its myriads.

From the houses then and the workshops, and through
all the doorways,
Leapt they tumultuous, and lo ! Manhattan arming.

To the drum-taps prompt,
The young men falling in and arming,
The mechanics arming, (the trowel, the jack-plane, the
blacksmith's hammer, tost aside with precipitation,)
The lawyer leaving his office and arming, the judge
leaving the court,
The driver deserting his waggon in the street, jumping
down, throwing the reins abruptly down on the
horses' backs,
The salesman leaving the store, the boss, book-keeper,
porter, all leaving ; [arm,
Squads gather everywhere by common consent and
The new recruits, even boys, the old men show them how
to wear their accoutrements, they buckle the straps
carefully,
Outdoors arming, indoors arming, the flash of the
musket-barrels,
The white tents cluster in camps, the arm'd sentries
around, the sunrise cannon and again at sunset,
Arm'd regiments arrive every day, pass through the
city, and embark from the wharves,
(How good they look as they tramp down to the river,
sweaty, with their guns on their shoulders !

How I love them ! how I could hug them, with their
brown faces and their clothes and knapsacks cover'd
with dust !)

The blood of the city up—arm'd ! arm'd ! the cry every-
where,

The flags flung out from the steeples of churches and
from all the public buildings and stores,

The tearful parting, the mother kisses her son, the son
kisses his mother,

(Loth is the mother to part, yet not a word does she
speak to detain him,)

The tumultuous escort, the ranks of policemen preceding,
clearing the way,

The unpent enthusiasm, the wild cheers of the crowd
for their favourites,

The artillery, the silent cannons bright as gold, drawn
along, rumble lightly over the stones,

(Silent cannons, soon to cease your silence,

Soon unlimber'd to begin the red business ;)

All the mutter of preparation, all the determin'd
arming,

The hospital service, the lint bandages and medicines,

The women volunteering for nurses, the work begun for
in earnest, no mere parade now ;

War ! an arm'd race is advancing ! the welcome for
battle, no turning away ;

War ! be it weeks, months, or years, an arm'd race is
advancing to welcome it.

Mannahatta a-march—and it's O to sing it well !

It's O for a manly life in the camp.

And the sturdy artillery,

The guns bright as gold, the work for giants, to serve
well the guns,

Unlimber them ! (no more as the past forty years for
salutes for courtesies merely,
Put in something now besides powder and wadding.)

And you lady of ships, you Mannahatta,
Old matron of this proud, friendly, turbulent city,
Often in peace and wealth you were pensive or covertly
frown'd amid all your children,
But now you smile with joy exulting old Mannahatta.

EIGHTEEN SIXTY-ONE.

ARM'D year—year of the struggle,
No dainty rhymes or sentimental love verses for you
terrible year,
Not you as some pale poetling seated at a desk lisping
cadenzas piano,
But as a strong man erect, clothed in blue clothes,
advancing, carrying a rifle on your shoulder,
With well-gristled body and sunburnt face and hands,
with a knife in the belt at your side,
As I heard you shouting loud, your sonorous voice
ringing across the continent,
Your masculine voice O year, as rising amid the great
cities,
Amid the men of Manhattan I saw you as one of the
workmen, the dwellers in Manhattan,
Or with large steps crossing the prairies out of Illinois
and Indiana,
Rapidly crossing the West with springy gait and
descending the Alleghanies,
Or down from the great lakes or in Pennsylvania, or on
deck along the Ohio river,

Or southward along the Tennessee or Cumberland rivers,
or at Chattanooga on the mountain top,
Saw I your gait and saw I your sinewy limbs clothed in
blue, bearing weapons, robust year,
Heard your determin'd voice launch'd forth again and
again,
Year that suddenly sang by the mouths of the round-
lipp'd cannon,
I repeat you, hurrying, crashing, sad, distracted year.

BEAT! BEAT! DRUMS!

BEAT! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!
Through the windows—through doors—burst like a
ruthless force,
Into the solemn church, and scatter the congregation,
Into the school where the scholar is studying;
Leave not the bridegroom quiet—no happiness must he
have now with his bride,
Nor the peaceful farmer any peace, ploughing his field
or gathering his grain,
So fierce you whirr and pound you drums—so shrill you
bugles blow.

Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!
Over the traffic of cities—over the rumble of wheels in
the streets;
Are beds prepared for sleepers at night in the houses?
no sleepers must sleep in those beds,
No bargainers' bargains by day—no brokers or specu-
lators—would they continue?
Would the talkers be talking? would the singer attempt
to sing?

Would the lawyer rise in the court to state his case
before the judge? [blow.
Then rattle quicker, heavier drums—you bugles wilder
Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!
Make no parley—stop for no expostulation,
Mind not the timid—mind not the weeper or prayer,
Mind not the old man beseeching the young man,
Let not the child's voice be heard, nor the mother's
entreaties,
Make even the trestles to shake the dead where they lie
awaiting the hearses,
So strong you thump O terrible drums—so loud you
bugles blow.

FROM PAUMANOK STARTING I FLY LIKE
A BIRD.

FROM Paumanok starting I fly like a bird,
Around and around to soar to sing the idea of all,
To the north betaking myself to sing there arctic songs,
To Kanada till I absorb Kanada in myself, to Michigan
then,
To Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, to sing their songs,
(they are inimitable;)
Then to Ohio and Indiana to sing theirs, to Missouri and
Kansas and Arkansas to sing theirs,
To Tennessee and Kentucky, to the Carolinas and Georgia
to sing theirs,
To Texas and so along up toward California, to roam
accepted everywhere;
To sing first, (to the tap of the war-drum if need be,)
The idea of all, of the Western world one and inseparable,
And then the song of each member of these States.

SONG OF THE BANNER AT DAYBREAK.

Poet.

O a new song, a free song,
Flapping, flapping, flapping, flapping, by sounds, by
 voices clearer,
By the wind's voice and that of the drum,
By the banner's voice and child's voice and sea's voice
 and father's voice,
Low on the ground and high in the air,
On the ground where father and child stand,
In the upward air where their eyes turn,
Where the banner at daybreak is flapping.

Words ! book-words ! what are you ?
Words no more, for hearken and see,
My song is there in the open air, and I must sing,
With the banner and pennant a-flapping.

I'll weave the cord and twine in,
Man's desire and babe's desire, I'll twine them in, I'll
 put in life,
I'll put the bayonet's flashing point, I'll let bullets and
 slugs whizz,
(As one carrying a symbol and menace far into the
 future,
Crying with trumpet voice, *Arouse and beware ! Beware
 and arouse !*)
I'll pour the verse with the streams of blood, full of
 volition, full of joy,
Then loosen, launch forth, to go and compete,
With the banner and pennant a-flapping.

Pennant.

Come up here, bard, bard,
Come up here, soul, soul,
Come up here, dear little child,
To fly in the clouds and winds with me, and play with
the measureless night.

Child.

Father what is that in the sky beckoning to me with
long finger ?
And what does it say to me all the while ?

Father.

Nothing my babe you see in the sky,
And nothing at all to you it says—but look you my
babe,
Look at these dazzling things in the houses, and see you
the money shops opening,
And see you the vehicles preparing to crawl along the
streets with goods ;
These, ah these, how valued and toil'd for these !
How envied by all the earth.

Poe.

Fresh and rosy red the sun is mounting high,
On floats the sea in distant blue careering through its
channels,
On floats the wind over the breast of the sea setting in
toward land,
The great steady wind from west or west-by-south,
Floating so bouyant with milk-white foam on the waters.

But I am not the sea nor the red sun,
I am not the wind with girlish laughter,
Not the immense wind which strengthens, not the wind
which lashes,
Not the spirit that ever lashes its own body to terror
and death,
But I am that which-unseen comes and sings, sings,
sings,
Which babbles in brooks and scoots in showers on the
land,
Which the birds know in the woods mornings and
evenings,
And the shore-sands know and the hissing wave, and
that banner and pennant,
Aloft there flapping and flapping.

Child.

O father it is alive—it is full of people—it has children,
O now it seems to me it is talking to its children,
I hear it—it talks to me—O it is wonderful !
O it stretches—it spreads and runs so fast—O my father,
It is so broad it covers the whole sky.

Father.

Cease, cease, my foolish babe,
What you are saying is sorrowful to me, much it
displeases me ;
Behold with the rest again I say, behold not banners
and pennants aloft,
But the well-prepared pavements behold, and mark the
solid-wall'd houses.

Banner and Pennant.

Speak to the child O hard out of Manhattan,
To our children all, or north or south of Manhattan,
Point this day, leaving all the rest, to us over all—and
yet we know not why,
For what are we, mere strips of cloth profiting nothing,
Only flapping in the wind?

Poet.

I hear and see no strips of cloth alone,
I hear the tramp of armies, I hear the challenging sentry,
I hear the jubilant shouts of millions of men, I hear
Liberty!
I hear the drums beat and the trumpets blowing,
I myself move abroad swift-rising flying then,
I use the wings of the land-bird and use the wings of the
sea-bird, and look down as from a height,
I do not deny the precious results of peace, I see
populous cities with wealth incalculable,
I see numberless farms, I see the farmers working in
their fields or barns,
I see mechanics working, I see buildings everywhere
founded, going up, or finish'd,
I see trains of cars swiftly speeding along railroad tracks
drawn by the locomotives,
I see the stores, depôts, of Boston, Baltimore, Charleston,
New Orleans,
I see far in the West the immense area of grain, I dwell
awhile hovering,
I pass to the lumber forests of the North, and again to
the Southern plantation, and again to California;
Sweeping the whole I see the countless profit, the busy
gatherings, earn'd wages,

See the Identity formed out of thirty-eight spacious and
 haughty States, (and many more to come,)
 See forts on the shores of harbours, see ships sailing in
 and out ;
 Then over all, (aye ! aye !) my little and lengthen'd
 pennant shaped like a sword,
 Runs swiftly up indicating war and defiance—and now
 the halyards have rais'd it,
 Side of my banner broad and blue, side of my starry
 banner,
 Discarding peace over all the sea and land.

Banner and Pennant.

Yet louder, higher, stronger, bard ! yet farther, wider
 cleave ! [alone,
 No longer let our children deem us riches and peace
 We may be terror and carnage, and are so now,
 Not now are we any one of these spacious and haughty
 States, (nor any five, nor ten,)
 Nor market nor depôt we, nor money-bank in the city,
 But these and all, and the brown and spreading land,
 and the mines below, are ours,
 And the shores of the sea are ours, and the rivers great
 and small,
 And the fields they moisten, and the crops and the
 fruits are ours,
 Bays and channels and ships sailing in and out are ours—
 while we over all,
 Over the area spread below, the three or four millions of
 square miles, the capitals,
 The forty millions of people,—O bard ! in life and death
 supreme,
 We, even we, henceforth flaunt out masterful, high up
 above,

Not for the present alone, for a thousand years chanting
through you,
This song to the soul of one poor little child.

Child.

O my father I like not the houses,
They will never to me be any thing, nor do I like money,
But to mount up there I would like, O father dear, that
 banner I like,
That pennant I would be and must be.

Father.

Child of mine you fill me with anguish,
To be that pennant would be too fearful,
Little you know what it is this day, and after this day,
 forever,
It is to gain nothing, but risk and defy every thing,
Forward to stand in front of wars—and O, such wars!—
 what have you to do with them?
With passions of demons, slaughter, premature death?

Banner.

Demons and death then I sing,
Put in all, aye all will I, sword-shaped pennant for war,
And a pleasure new and ecstatic, and the prattled yearn-
 ing of children,
Blent with the sounds of the peaceful land and the
 liquid wash of the sea,
And the black ships fighting on the sea envelop'd in
 smoke,
And the icy cool of the far, far north, with rustling
 cedars and pines,

And the whirr of drums and the sound of soldiers
marching and the hot sun shining south,
And the beach-waves combing over the beach on my
Eastern shore, and my Western shore the same,
And all between those shores, and my ever-running
Mississippi with bends and chutes,
And my Illinois fields, and my Kansas fields, and my
fields of Missouri,
The Continent, devoting the whole identity without
reserving an atom,
Pour in ! whelm that which asks, which sings, with all
and the yield of all,
Fusing and holding, claiming, devouring the whole,
No more with tender lip, nor musical labial sound,
But out of the night emerging for good, our voice
persuasive no more,
Croaking like crows here in the wind.

Poet.

My limbs, my veins dilate, my theme is clear at last,
Banner so broad advancing out of the night, I sing you
haughty and resolute,
I burst through where I waited long, too long, deafen'd
and blinded,
My hearing and tongue are come to me, (a little child
taught me,)
I hear from above O pennant of war your ironical call
and demand, [banner !
Insensate ! insensate ! (yet I at any rate chant you,) O
Not houses of peace indeed are you, nor any nor all
their prosperity, (if need be, you shall again have
every one of those houses to destroy them,
You thought not to destroy those valuable houses,
standing fast, full of comfort, built with money.

May they stand fast, then? not an hour except you
above them and all stand fast ;)
O banner, not money so precious are you, not farm
produce you, nor the material good nutriment,
Nor excellent stores, nor landed on wharves from the
ships,
Not the superb ships with sail-power or steam-power,
fetching and carrying cargoes,
Nor machinery, vehicles, trade, nor revenues—but you
as henceforth I see you,
Running up out of the night, bringing your cluster of
stars, (ever enlarging stars,)
Divider of daybreak you, cutting the air, touch'd by the
sun, measuring the sky,
(Passionately seen and yearn'd for by one poor little
child,
While others remain busy or smartly talking, forever
teaching thrift, thrift ;)
O you up there! O pennant! where you undulate like a
snake hissing so curious,
Out of reach, an idea only, yet furiously fought for,
risking bloody death, loved by me,
So loved—O you banner leading the day with stars
brought from the night!
Valueless, object of eyes, over all and demanding all—
(absolute owner of all)—O banner and pennant!
I too leave the rest—great as it is, it is nothing—houses,
machines are nothing—I see them not,
I see but you, O warlike pennant! O banner so broad,
with stripes, I sing you only,
Flapping up there in the wind.

RISE O DAYS FROM YOUR FATHOMLESS
DEEPS.

RISE O days from your fathomless deeps, till you loftier,
fiercer sweep,
Long for my soul hungering gymnastic I devour'd what
the earth gave me,
Long I roam'd the woods of the north, long I watch'd
Niagara pouring,
I travell'd the prairies over and slept on their breast, I
cross'd the Nevadas, I crossed the plateaus,
I ascended the towering rocks along the Pacific, I sail'd
out to sea, [storm,
I sail'd through the storm, I was refreshed by the
I watch'd with joy the threatening maws of the waves,
I mark'd the white combs where they career'd so high,
curling over,
I hear the wind piping, I saw the black clouds,
Saw from below what arose and mounted, (O superb !
O wild as my heart, and powerful !)
Heard the continuous thunder as it bellow'd after the
lightning,
Noted the slender and jagged threads of lightning as
sudden and fast amid the din they chased each
other across the sky ;
These, and such as these, I, elate, saw—saw with
wonder, yet pensive and masterful,
All the menacing might of the globe uprisen around me,
Yet there with my soul I fed, I fed content, supercilious.

2.

'Twas well, O soul—'twas a good preparation you gave
me,
Now we advance our latent and ampler hunger to fill,

Now we go forth to receive what the earth and the sea
never gave us,
Not through the mighty woods we go, but through the
mightier cities,
Something for us is pouring now more than Niagara
pouring,
Torrents of men, (sources and rills of the Northwest are
you indeed inexhaustible ?)
What, to pavements and homesteads here, what were
those storms of the mountains and sea ?
What, to passions I witness around me to-day ? was the
sea risen ?
Was the wind piping the pipe of death under the black
clouds ?
Lo ! from deeps more unfathomable, something more
deadly and savage,
Manhattan rising, advancing with menacing front—Cin-
cinnati, Chicago, unchain'd ;
What was that swell I saw on the ocean ? behold what
comes here, [dashes !
How it climbs with daring feet and hands—how it
How the true thunder bellows after the lightning—how
bright the flashes of lightning !
How Democracy with desperate vengeful port strides on,
shown through the dark by those flashes of light-
ning !
(Yet a mournful wail and low sob I fancied I heard
through the dark,
In a lull of the deafening confusion.)

3.

Thunder on ! stride on, Democracy ! strike with venge-
ful stroke !
And do you rise higher than ever yet O days, O cities !

Crash heavier, heavier yet O storms ! you have done me
 good,
 My soul prepared in the mountains absorbs your immortal strong nutriment,
 Long had I walk'd my cities, my country roads through
 farms, only half satisfied,
 One doubt nauseous undulating like a snake, crawl'd on
 the ground before me,
 Continually preceding my steps, turning upon me oft,
 ironically hissing low ;
 The cities I loved so well I abandon'd and left, I sped
 to the certainties suitable to me,
 Hungering, hungering, hungering, for primal energies
 and Nature's dauntlessness,
 I refresh'd myself with it only, I could relish it only,
 I waited the bursting forth of the pent fire—on the water
 and air I waited long ;
 But now I no longer wait, I am fully satisfied, I am
 glutt'd, [cities electric,
 I have witness'd the true lightning, I have witness'd my
 I have lived to behold man burst forth and warlike
 America rise,
 Hence I will seek no more the food of the northern
 solitary wilds,
 No more the mountains roam or sail the stormy sea.

VIRGINIA—THE WEST.

THE noble sire fallen on evil days,
 I saw with hand uplifted, menacing, brandishing,
 (Memories of old in abeyance, love and faith in abey-
 ance,)
 The insane knife toward the Mother of All.

The noble son on sinewy feet advancing,
I saw, out of the land of prairies, land of Ohio's waters
and of Indiana,
To the rescue the stalwart giant hurry his plenteous
offspring,
Drest in blue, bearing their trusty rifles on their
shoulders.

Then the Mother of All with calm voice speaking,
As to you Rebellious, (I seemed to hear her say,) why
strive against me, and why seek my life?
When you yourself forever provide to defend me?
For you provided me Washington—and now these also.

CITY OF SHIPS.

CITY of ships!
(O the black ships! O the fierce ships!
O the beautiful sharp-bow'd steam-ships and sail-ships!)
City of the world! (for all races are here,
All the lands of the earth make contributions here;)
City of the sea! city of hurried and glittering tides!
City whose gleeful tides continually rush or recede,
whirling in and out with eddies and foam!
City of wharves and stores—city of tall façades of marble
and iron!
Proud and passionate city—mettlesome, mad, extrava-
gant city!
Spring up O city—not for peace alone, but be indeed
yourself, warlike!
Fear not—submit to no models but your own O city!
Behold me—incarnate me as I have incarnated you!

I have rejected nothing you offer'd me—whom you
adopted I have adopted,
Good or bad I never question you—I love all—I do not
condemn any thing,
I chant and celebrate all that is yours—yet peace no
more, [mine,
In peace I chanted peace, but now the drum of war is
War, red war is my song through your streets, O city !

CAVALRY CROSSING A FORD.

A LINE in long array where they wind betwixt green
islands,
They take a serpentine course, their arms flash in the
sun—hark to the musical clank,
Behold the silvery river, in it the splashing horses
loitering stop to drink,
Behold the brown-faced men, each group, each person,
a picture, the negligent rest on the saddles,
Some emerge on the opposite bank, others are just
entering the ford—while,
Scarlet and blue and snowy white,
The guidon flags flutter gaily in the wind.

BIVOUAC ON A MOUNTAIN SIDE.

I SEE before me now a travelling army halting,
Below a fertile valley spread, with barns and the
orchards of summer,
Behind, the terraced sides of a mountain, abrupt, in
places rising high,

Broken, with rocks, with clinging cedars, with tall
 shapes dingily seen,
The numerous camp-fires scatter'd near and far, some
 away up on the mountain,
The shadowy forms of men and horses, looming, large-
 sized, flickering,
And over all the sky—the sky ! far, far out of reach,
 studded, breaking out, the eternal stars.

AN ARMY CORPS ON THE MARCH.

With its cloud of skirmishers in advance,
With now the sound of a single shot snapping like a
 whip, and now an irregular volley,
The swarming ranks press on and on, the dense brigades
 press on, [men,
Glittering dimly, toiling under the sun—the dust-cover'd
In columns rise and fall to the undulations of the
 ground,
With artillery interspers'd—the wheels rumble, the
 horses sweat,
As the army corps advances.

BY THE BIVOUAC'S FITFUL FLAME.

By the bivouac's fitful flame,
A procession winding around me, solemn and sweet and
 slow—but first I note,
The tents of the sleeping army, the fields' and woods'
 dim outline,

The darkness lit by spots of kindled fire, the silence,
Like a phantom far or near an occasional figure moving,
The shrubs and trees, (as I lift my eyes they seem to be
stealthily watching me,)
While wind in procession thoughts, O tender and
wondrous thoughts,
Of life and death, of home and the past and loved, and
of those that are far away ;
A solemn and slow procession there as I sit on the
ground,
By the bivouac's fitful flame.

COME UP FROM THE FIELDS FATHER.

COME up from the fields father, here's a letter from our
Pete,
And come to the front door mother, here's a letter from
thy dear son.

Lo, 'tis autumn,
Lo, where the trees, deeper green, yellower and redder,
Cool and sweeten Ohio's villages with leaves fluttering in
the moderate wind,
Where apples ripe in the orchards hang and grapes on the
trellis'd vines,
(Smell you the smell of the grapes on the vines ?
Smell you the buckwheat where the bees were lately
buzzing ?)
Above all, lo, the sky so calm, so transparent after the
rain, and with wondrous clouds,
Below too, all calm, all vital and beautiful, and the
farm prospers well.

Down in the fields all prospers well,
But now from the fields come father, come at the
daughter's call,
And come to the entry mother, to the front door come
right away.

Fast as she can she hurries, something ominous, her
steps trembling, [cap.
She does not tarry to smooth her hair nor adjust her

Open the envelope quickly,
O this is not our son's writing, yet his name is sign'd,
O a strange hand writes for our dear son, O stricken
mother's soul!

All swims before her eyes, flashes with black, she
catches the main words only,
Sentences broken, *gunshot wound in the breast, cavalry
skirmish, taken to hospital,*
At present low, but will soon be better.

Ah now the single figure to me,
Amid all teeming and wealthy Ohio with all its cities
and farms,
Sickly white in the face and dull in the head, very
faint,
By the jamb of a door leans.

*Grieve not so, dear mother, (the just-grown daughter
speaks through her sobs,
The little sisters huddle around speechless and dismay'd,)
See dearest mother, the letter says Pete will soon be
better.*

Alas poor boy, he will never be better, (nor may-be
needs to be better, that brave and simple soul,)

While they stand at home at the door he is dead already,
The only son is dead.

But the mother needs to be better,
She with thin form presently drest in black,
By day her meals untouch'd, then at night fitfully
 sleeping, often waking,
In the midnight waking, weeping, longing with one deep
 longing,
O that she might withdraw unnoticed, silent from life
 escape and withdraw,
To follow, to seek, to be with her dear dead son.

VIGIL STRANGE I KEPT ON THE FIELD ONE
NIGHT.

VIGIL strange I kept on the field one night;
When you my son and my comrade dropt at my side
 that day,
One look I but gave which your dear eyes return'd with
 a look I shall never forget,
One touch of your hand to mine O boy, reach'd up as you
 lay on the ground,
Then onward I sped in the battle, the even-contested
 battle,
Till late in the night reliev'd to the place at last again I
 made my way,
Found you in death so cold dear comrade, found your
 body son of responding kisses, (never again on earth
 responding,)
Bared your face in the starlight, curious the scene, cool
 blew the moderate night-wind,

Long there and then in vigil I stood, dimly around me
the battle-field spreading,
Vigil wondrous and vigil sweet there in the fragrant
silent night,
But not a tear fell, nor even a long-drawn sigh, long,
long I gazed,
Then on the earth partially reclining sat by your side
leaning my chin in my hands,
Passing sweet hours, immortal and mystic hours with
you dearest comrade—not a tear not a word,
Vigil of silence, love and death, vigil for you my son
and my soldier,
As onward silently stars aloft, eastward new ones up-
ward stole,
Vigil final for you brave boy, (I could not save you,
swift was your death,
I faithfully loved you and cared for you living, I think
we shall surely meet again,)
Till at latest lingering of the night, indeed just as the
dawn appear'd,
My comrade I wrapt in his blanket, envelop'd well his
form,
Folded the blanket well, tucking it carefully over head
and carefully under feet,
And there and then and bathed by the rising sun, my
son in his grave, in his rude-dug grave I deposited,
Ending my vigil strange with that, vigil of night and
battle-field dim,
Vigil for boy of responding kisses, (never again on earth
responding,)
Vigil for comrade swiftly slain, vigil I never forget, how
day brighten'd,
I rose from the chill ground and folded my soldier well
in his blanket,
And buried him where he fell.

A MARCH IN THE RANKS HARD-PREST, AND
THE ROAD UNKNOWN.

A MARCH in the ranks hard-prest, and the road unknown,
A route through a heavy wood with muffled steps in the
darkness,
Our army foil'd with loss severe, and the sullen remnant
retreating,
Till after midnight glimmer upon us the lights of a dim-
lighted building,
We come to an open space in the woods, and halt by the
dim-lighted building,
'Tis a large old church at the crossing roads, now an
impromptu hospital,
Entering but for a minute I see a sight beyond all the
pictures and poems ever made,
Shadows of deepest, deepest black, just lit by moving
candles and lamps,
And by one great pitchy torch stationary with wild red
flame and clouds of smoke,
By these, crowds, groups of forms vaguely I see on the
floor, some in the pews laid down,
At my feet more distinctly a soldier, a mere lad, in
danger of bleeding to death, (he is shot in the
abdomen,)
I stanch the blood temporarily, (the youngster's face is
white as a lily,)
Then before I depart I sweep my eyes o'er the scene fain
to absorb it all,
Faces, varieties, postures beyond description, most in
obscurity, some of them dead,
Surgeons operating, attendants holding lights, the smell
of ether, the odour of blood,
The crowd, O the crowd of the bloody forms, the yard
outside also fill'd,

Some on the bare ground, some on planks or stretchers,
some in the death-spasm sweating,
An occasional scream or cry, the doctor's shouted orders
or calls,
The glisten of the little steel instruments catching the
glint of the torches,
These I resume as I chant, I see again the forms, I
smell the odour, [fall in ;
Then hear outside the orders given, *Fall in, my men,*
But first I bend to the dying lad, his eyes open, a half-
smile gives he me,
Then the eyes close, calmly close, and I speed forth to
the darkness,
Resuming marching, ever in darkness marching, on in
the ranks,
The unknown road still marching.

A SIGHT IN CAMP IN THE DAYBREAK GREY AND DIM.

A SIGHT in camp in the daybreak grey and dim,
As from my tent I emerge so early sleepless,
As slow I walk in the cool fresh air the path near by the
hospital tent,
Three forms I see on stretchers lying, brought out there
untended lying,
Over each the blanket spread, ample brownish woollen
blanket,
Grey and heavy blanket, folding, covering all.

Curious I halt and silent stand,
Then with light fingers I from the face of the nearest
the first just lift the blanket ;

Who are you elderly man so gaunt and grim, with well-
grey'd hair, and flesh all sunken about the eyes?
Who are you my dear comrade?

Then to the second I step—and who are you my child
and darling?
Who are you sweet boy with cheeks yet blooming?

Then to the third—a face nor child nor old, very calm,
as of beautiful yellow-white ivory;
Young man I think I know you—I think this face is
the face of the Christ himself,
Dead and divine and brother of all, and here again he
lies.

AS TOILSOME I WANDER'D VIRGINIA'S WOODS.

As toilsome I wander'd Virginia's woods,
To the music of rustling leaves kick'd by my feet, (for
'twas autumn,) I mark'd at the foot of a tree the grave of a soldier;
Mortally wounded he and buried on the retreat, (easily
all could I understand,) The halt of a mid-day hour, when up! no time to lose
—yet this sign left,
On a tablet scrawl'd and nail'd on the tree by the grave,
Bold, cautious, true, and my loving comrade.

Long, long I muse, then on my way go wandering,
Many a changeful season to follow, and many a scene of
life,

Yet at times through changeful season and scene,
 Abroad alone or in the crowded street,
 Comes before me the unknown soldier's grave, comes
 the inscription rude in Virginia's woods,
Sold, sometimes, true, and my loving comrade.

NOT THE PILOT.

Not the pilot has charged himself to bring his ship into
 port, though beaten back and many times baffled;
 Not the pioneer penetrating inland weary and long,
 By desert's parch'd snows chilled, rivers wet, perseveres
 till he reaches his destination,
 More than I have charged myself headed or unheaded,
 to compose a march for these States.
 For a battle-rail, ready to arms if need be, years,
 centuries hence.

YEAR THAT TREMBLED AND REEL'D BENEATH ME.

Year that trembled and reel'd beneath me!
 Your summer wind was warm enough, yet the air I
 breathed froze me,
 A thick gloom fell through the sunshine and darken'd
 me,
 Must I change my triumphant songs! said I to myself,
 Must I indeed learn to chant the cold dirges of the
 baffled!
 And silent hymns of defeat!

THE WOUND-DRESSER.

1.

An old man bending I come among new faces,
 Years looking backward resuming in answer to children,
 Come tell us old man, as from young men and maidens
 that love me,
 (Arous'd and angry, I'd thought to beat the alarm,
 and urge relentless war,
 But soon my fingers call'd me, my face droop'd and I
 resign'd myself,
 To sit by the wounded and soothe them, or silently
 watch the dead;)

Years hence of these scenes, of these furious passions,
 these chances,
 Of unsurpass'd heroes (was one side so brave! the other
 was equally brave!)
 Now be witness again, paint the mightiest armies of
 earth,
 Of those armies so rapid so wondrous what saw you to
 tell us! [pauses,
 What stays with you latest and deepest! of curious
 Of hard-fought engagements or sieges tremendous what
 deepest remains!

2

O maidens and young men I love and that love me,
 What you ask of my days those the strangest and
 sudden your talking recalls,
 Soldier alert I arrive after a long march cover'd with
 sweat and dust,
 In the nick of time I come, plunge in the fight, loudly
 shout in the rush of successful charge,
 Enter the captur'd works—yet lo, like a swift-running
 river they fade,

Pass and are gone they fade—I dwell not on soldiers'
perils or soldiers' joys,
(Both I remember well—many the hardships, few the
joys, yet I was content).

But in silence, in dreams' projections,
While the world of gain and appearance and mirth
goes on,
So soon what is over forgotten, and waves wash the
imprints off the sand,
With hinged knees returning I enter the doors (while
for you up there,
Whoever you are, follow without noise and be of strong
heart.)

Bearing the bandages, water and sponge,
Straight and swift to my wounded I go,
Where they lie on the ground after the battle brought in,
Where their priceless blood reddens the grass the ground,
Or to the rows of the hospital tent, or under the roof'd
hospital,
To the long rows of cots up and down each side I return,
To each and all one after another I draw near, not one
do I miss, [pail,
An attendant follows holding a tray, he carries a refuse
Soon to be fill'd with clotted rags and blood, emptied,
and fill'd again.

I onward go, I stop,
With hinged knees and steady hand to dress wounds,
I am firm with each, the pangs are sharp yet unavoidable,
One turns to me his appealing eyes—poor boy! I never
knew you,
Yet I think I could not refuse this moment to die for
you, if that would save you.

8.

On, on I go, (open doors of time ! open hospital doors !)
The crush'd head I dress, (poor crazed hand tear not the
bandage away,)

The neck of the cavalry-man with the bullet through
and through I examine,

Hard the breathing rattles, quite glazed already the eye,
yet life struggles hard,

(Come sweet death ! be persuaded O beautiful death !
In mercy come quickly.)

From the stump of the arm, the amputated hand,
I undo the clotted lint, remove the slough, wash off the
matter and blood,

Back on his pillow the soldier bends with curv'd neck
and side-falling head,

His eyes are closed, his face is pale, he dares not look on
the bloody stump,

And has not yet look'd on it.

I dress a wound in the side, deep, deep,
But a day or two more, for see the frame all wasted and
sinking,

And the yellow-blue countenance see.

I dress the perforated shoulder, the foot with the bullet-
wound,

Cleanse the one with a gnawing and putrid gangrene, so
sickening, so offensive,

While the attendant stands behind aside me holding the
tray and pail.

I am faithful, I do not give out,
The fractur'd thigh, the knee, the wound in the
abdomen,

These and more I dress with impassive hand, (yet deep
in my breast a fire, a burning flame.)

4.

Thus in silence in dreams' projections,
Returning, resuming, I thread my way through the
hospitals,
The hurt and wounded I pacify with soothing hand,
I sit by the restless all the dark night, some are so
young,
Some suffer so much, I recall the experience sweet and
sad,
(Many a soldier's loving arms about this neck have
cross'd and rested,
Many a soldier's kiss dwells on these bearded lips.)

LONG, TOO LONG AMERICA.

LONG, too long America,
Travelling roads all even and peaceful you learn'd from
joys and prosperity only,
But now, ah now, to learn from crises of anguish,
advancing, grappling with direst fate and recoiling
not,
And now to conceive and show to the world what your
children en-masse really are,
(For who except myself has yet conceiv'd what your
children en-masse really are?)

GIVE ME THE SPLENDID SILENT SUN.

1.

GIVE me the splendid silent sun with all his beams full-dazzling,
Give me juicy autumnal fruit ripe and red from the orchard,
Give me a field where the unmow'd grass grows,
Give me an harbour, give me the trellis'd grape,
Give me fresh corn and wheat, give me serene-moving animals teaching content,
Give me nights perfectly quiet as on high plateaus west of the Mississippi, and I looking up at the stars,
Give me odorous at sunrise a garden of beautiful flowers where I can walk undisturb'd,
Give me for marriage a sweet-breath'd woman of whom I should never tire,
Give me a perfect child, give me away aside from the noise of the world a rural domestic life,
Give me to warble spontaneous songs recluse by myself, for my own ears only,
Give me solitude, give me Nature, give me again O Nature your primal sanities !

These demanding to have them, (tired with ceaseless excitement, and rack'd by the war-strife,)
These to procure incessantly asking, rising in cries from my heart,
While yet incessantly asking still I adhere to my city,
Day upon day and year upon year O city, walking your streets,
Where you hold me enchain'd a certain time refusing to give me up,

Yet giving to make me glutt'd, enrich'd of soul, you
 give me forever faces ;
 (O I see what I sought to escape, confronting, reversing
 my cries,
 I see my own soul trampling down what I ask'd for.)

2.

Keep your splendid silent sun,
 Keep your woods O Nature, and the quiet places by the
 woods,
 Keep your fields of clover and timothy, and your corn-
 fields and orchards,
 Keep the blossoming buckwheat fields where the Ninth-
 month bees hum ;
 Give me faces and streets—give me these phantoms
 incessant and endless along the trottoirs !
 Give me interminable eyes—give me women—give me
 comrades and lovers by the thousand !
 Let me see new ones every day—let me hold new ones
 by the hand every day !
 Give me such shows—give me the streets of Manhattan !
 Give me Broadway, with the soldiers marching—give
 me the sound of the trumpets and drums !
 (The soldiers in companies or regiments—some starting
 away, flush'd and reckless,
 Some, their time up, returning with thinn'd ranks,
 young, yet very old, worn, marching, noticing
 nothing ;))
 Give me the shores and wharves heavy-fringed with
 black ships ! [varied !
 O such for me ! O an intense life, full to repletion and
 The life of the theatre, bar-room, huge hotel, for me !
 The saloon of the steamer ! the crowded excursion for
 me ! the torchlight procession !

The dense brigade bound for the war, with high piled
military waggons following ;
People, endless, streaming, with strong voices, passions,
pageants,
Manhattan streets with their powerful throbs, with
beating drums as now,
The endless and noisy chorus, the rustle and clank of
muskets, (even the sight of the wounded,)
Manhattan crowds, with their turbulent musical chorus !
Manhattan faces and eyes forever for me.

DIRGE FOR TWO VETERANS.

THE last sunbeam
Lightly falls from the finish'd Sabbath,
On the pavement here, and there beyond it is looking
Down a new-made double grave.

Lo, the moon ascending,
Up from the east the silvery round moon,
Beautiful over the house-tops, ghastly, phantom moon,
Immense and silent moon.

I see a sad procession,
And I hear the sound of coming full-key'd bugles,
All the channels of the city streets they're flooding
As with voices and with tears.

I hear the great drums pounding,
And the small drums steady whirring,
And every blow of the great convulsive drums
Strikes me through and through.

For the son is brought with the father,
(In the foremost ranks of the fierce assault they felt,
Two veterans son and father dropt together,
And the double grave awaits them.)

Now nearer blow the bugles,
And the drums strike more convulsive,
And the daylight o'er the pavement quite has faded,
And the strong dead-march enwraps me.

In the eastern sky up-buoying,
The sorrowful vast phantom moves illumin'd,
('Tis some mother's large transparent face,
In heaven brighter growing.)

O strong dead-march you please me !
O moon immense with your silvery face you soothe me !
O my soldiers twain ! O my veterans passing to burial !
What I have I also give you.

The moon gives you light,
And the bugles and the drums give you music,
And my heart, O my soldiers, my veterans,
My heart gives you love.

OVER THE CARNAGE ROSE PROPHEPIC A VOICE.

OVER the carnage rose prophetic a voice,
Be not dishearten'd, affection shall solve the problems
of freedom yet,
Those who love each other shall become invincible,
Thay shall yet make Columbia victorious.

Sons of the Mother of All, you shall yet be victorious,
You shall yet laugh to scorn the attacks of all the
remainder of the earth.

No danger shall balk Columbia's lovers,
If need be a thousand shall sternly immolate themselves
for one.

One from Massachusetts shall be a Missourian comrade,
From Maine and from hot Carolina, and another an
Oregonese, shall be friends triune,
More precious to each other than all the riches of the
earth.

To Michigan, Florida perfumes shall tenderly come,
Not the perfumes of flowers, but sweeter, and wafted
beyond death.

It shall be customary in the houses and streets to see
manly affection,
The most dauntless and rude shall touch face to face
lightly,
The dependence of Liberty shall be lovers,
The continuance of Equality shall be comrades.

These shall tie you and band you stronger than hoops of
iron,
I, ecstatic, O partners ! O lands ! with the love of lovers
tie you.

(Were you looking to be held together by lawyers ?
Or by an agreement on a paper ? or by arms ?
Nay, nor the world, nor any living thing, will so cohere.)

I SAW OLD GENERAL AT BAY.

I SAW old General at bay,
(Old as he was, his grey eyes yet shone out in battle
like stars,)
His small force was now completely hemm'd in, in his
works,
He call'd for volunteers to run the enemy's lines, a
desperate emergency,
I saw a hundred and more step forth from the ranks, but
two or three were selected,
I saw them receive their orders aside, they listen'd with
care, the adjutant was very grave,
I saw them depart with cheerfulness, freely risking their
lives.

THE ARTILLERYMAN'S VISION.

WHILE my wife at my side lies slumbering, and the wars
are over long,
And my head on the pillow rests at home, and the
vacant midnight passes,
And through the stillness, through the dark, I hear,
just hear, the breath of my infant,
There in the room as I wake from sleep this vision
presses upon me ;
The engagement opens there and then in fantasy unreal,
The skirmishers begin, they crawl cautiously ahead, I
hear the irregular snap ! snap !
I hear the sounds of the different missiles, the short
t-h-t ! t-h-t ! of the rifle balls,
I see the shells exploding leaving small white clouds, I
hear the great shells shrieking as they pass,

The grape like the hum and whirr of wind through the
trees, (tumultuous now the contest rages,) [again,
All the scenes at the batteries rise in detail before me
The crashing and smoking, the pride of the men in
their pieces,
The chief-gunner ranges and sights his piece and selects
a fuse of the right time,
After firing I see him lean aside and look eagerly off to
note the effect ;
Elsewhere I hear the cry of a regiment charging, (the
young colonel leads himself this time with brandish'd sword,)
I see the gaps cut by the enemy's volleys, (quickly fill'd
up, no delay,)
I breathe the suffocating smoke, then the flat clouds
hover low concealing all ; [either side,
Now a strange lull for a few seconds, not a shot fired on
Then resumed the chaos louder than ever, with eager
calls and orders of officers,
While from some distant part of the field the wind
wafts to my ears a shout of applause, (some special
success,)
And ever the sound of the cannon far or near, (rousing
even in dreams a devilish exultation and all the old
mad joy in the depths of my soul,)
And ever the hastening of infantry shifting positions,
batteries, cavalry, moving hither and thither,
(The falling, dying, I heed not, the wounded dripping
and red I heed not, some to the rear are hobbling,)
Grime, heat, rush, aides-de-camp galloping by or on a
full run,
With the patter of small arms, the warning *s-s-t* of the
rifles, (these in my vision I hear or see,)
And bombs bursting in air, and at night the vari-colour'd
rockets.

ETHIOPIA SALUTING THE COLOURS.

WHO are you dusky woman, so ancient hardly human,
With your woolly-white and turban'd head, and bare
bony feet ?

Why rising by the roadside here, do you the colours
greet ?

('Tis while our army lines Carolina's sands and pines,
Forth from thy hovel door thou Ethiopia com'st to me,
As under doughty Sherman I march toward the sea.)

*Me master years a hundred since from my parents
sunder'd,*

*A little child, they caught me as the savage beast is caught,
Then hither me across the sea the cruel slaver brought.*

No further does she say, but lingering all the day,
Her high-borne turban'd head she wags, and rolls her
darkling eye,
And courtesies to the regiments, the guidons moving by.

What is it fateful woman, so blear, hardly human ?
Why wag your head with turban bound, yellow, red and
green ?
Are the things so strange and marvellous you see or
have seen ?

NOT YOUTH PERTAINS TO ME.

Nor youth pertains to me,
Not delicatesse, I cannot beguile the time with talk,
Awkward in the parlour, neither a dancer nor elegant.

In the learn'd coterie sitting constrain'd and still, for
learning inures not to me,
Beauty, knowledge, innre not to me—yet there are two
or three things inure to me,
I have nourish'd the wounded and sooth'd many a dying
soldier,
And at intervals waiting or in the midst of camp,
Composed these songs.

RACE OF VETERANS.

RACE of veterans—race of victors !
Race of the soil, ready for conflict—race of the conquering
march !
(No more credulity's race, abiding-temper'd race,)
Race henceforth owning no law but the law of itself,
Race of passion and the storm.

O TAN-FACED PRAIRIE-BOY.

O TAN-FACED prairie-boy,
Before you came to camp came many a welcome gift,
Praises and presents came and nourishing food, till at
last among the recruits,
You came, taciturn, with nothing to give—we but look'd
on each other,
When lo ! more than all the gifts of the world you gave
me.

LOOK DOWN FAIR MOON.

Look down fair moon and bathe this scene,
Pour softly down night's nimbus floods on faces ghastly,
 swollen, purple,
On the dead on their backs with arms toss'd wide,
Pour down your unstinted nimbus sacred moon

RECONCILIATION.

Word over all, beautiful as the sky,
Beautiful that war and all its deeds of carnage must in
 time be utterly lost,
That the hands of the sisters Death and Night
 incessantly softly wash again, and ever again, this
 soil'd world;
For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead,
I look where he lies white-faced and still in the coffin—
 I draw near,
Bend down and touch lightly with my lips the white face
 in the coffin.

HOW SOLEMN AS ONE BY ONE.

(*Washington City, 1865.*)

How solemn as one by one,
As the ranks returning worn and sweaty, as the men file
 by where I stand,
As the faces the masks appear, as I glance at the faces
 studying the masks,

(As I glance upward out of this page studying you, dear
friend, whoever you are,)
How solemn the thought of my whispering soul to each
in the ranks, and to you,
I see behind each mask that wonder a kindred soul,
O the bullet could never kill what you really are, dear
friend,
Nor the bayonet stab what you really are ;
The soul ! yourself I see, great as any, good as the best,
Waiting secure and content, which the bullet could
never kill,
Nor the bayonet stab O friend.

AS I LAY WITH MY HEAD IN YOUR LAP
CAMERADO.

As I lay with my head in your lap camerado,
The confession I made I resume, what I said to you and
the open air I resume,
I know I am restless and make others so,
I know my words are weapons full of danger, full of
death,
For I confront peace, security, and all the settled laws,
to unsettle them,
I am more resolute because all have denied me than I
could ever have been had all accepted me,
I heed not and have never heeded either experience,
cautions, majorities, nor ridicule,
And the threat of what is call'd hell is little or nothing
to me,
And the lure of what is call'd heaven is little or nothing
to me ;

Dear camerado ! I confess I have urged you onward with
me, and still urge you, without the least idea what
is our destination,
Or whether we shall be victorious, or utterly quell'd and
defeated.

DELICATE CLUSTER.

DELICATE cluster ! flag of teeming life !
Covering all my lands—all my seashores lining !
Flag of death ! (how I watch'd you through the smoke
of battle pressing !
How I heard you flap and rustle, cloth defiant !)
Flag cerulean—sunny flag, with the orbs of night
dappled !
Ah my silvery beauty—ah my woolly white and crimson !
Ah to sing the song of you my matron mighty !
My sacred one, my mother.

TO A CERTAIN CIVILIAN.

DID you ask dulcet rhymes from me ?
Did you seek the civilian's peaceful and languishing
rhymes ?
Did you find what I sang erewhile so hard to follow ;
Why I was not singing erewhile for you to follow, to
understand—nor am I now ;
(I have been born of the same as the war was born,
The drum-corps' rattle is ever to me sweet music, I love
well the martial dirge,

SPIRIT WHOSE WORK IS DONE. 189

With slow wail and convulsive throb leading the officer's
funeral ;))
What to such as you anyhow such a poet as I ! therefore
leave my works,
And go lull yourself with what you can understand, and
with piano-tunes,
For I lull nobody, and you will never understand me.

LO, VICTRESS ON THE PEAKS.

Lo, Victress on the peaks,
Where thou with mighty brow regarding the world,
(The world O Libertad, that vainly conspired against
thee,) [them all,
Out of its countless beleaguering toils, after thwarting
Dominant, with the dazzling sun around thee,
Flauntest now unharm'd in immortal soundness and
bloom—lo, in these hours supreme,
No poem proud, I chanting bring to thee, nor mastery's
rapturous verse, [dripping wounds,
But a cluster containing night's darkness and blood-
And psalms of the dead.

SPIRIT WHOSE WORK IS DONE.

(*Washington City, 1865.*)

SPIRIT whose work is done—spirit of dreadful hours !
Ere departing fade from my eyes your forests of bayonets ;
Spirit of gloomiest fears and doubts, (yet onward ever
unfaltering pressing,)

Spirit of many a solemn day and many a savage scene—
 electric spirit,
That with muttering voice through the war now closed,
 like a tireless phantom flitted,
Rousing the land with breath of flame, while you beat
 and beat the drum,
Now as the sound of the drum, hollow and harsh to the
 last, reverberates round me,
As your ranks, your immortal ranks, return, return from
 the battles,
As the muskets of the young men yet lean over their
 shoulders,
As I look on the bayonets bristling over their shoulders,
As those slanted bayonets, whole forests of them appear-
 ing in the distance, approach and pass on, returning
 homeward,
Moving with steady motion, swaying to and fro to the
 right and left, [time ;
Evenly lightly rising and falling while the steps keep
Spirit of hours I knew, all hectic red one day, but pale
 as death next day,
Touch my mouth ere you depart, press my lips close,
Leave me your pulses of rage—bequeath them to me—
 fill me with currents convulsive,
Let them scorch and blister out of my chants when you
 are gone,
Let them identify you to the future in these songs.

ADIEU TO A SOLDIER.

ADIEU O soldier,
You of the rude campaigning, (which we shared,)
The rapid march, the life of the camp,

The hot contention of opposing fronts, the long
 manœuvre,
 Red battles with their slaughter, the stimulus, the
 strong terrific game,
 Spell of all brave and manly hearts, the trains of time
 through you and like of you all fill'd,
 With war and war's expression.

Adieu dear comrade,
 Your mission is fulfill'd—but I, more warlike,
 Myself and this contentious soul of mine,
 Still on our own campaigning bound,
 Through untried roads with ambushes opponents lined,
 Through many a sharp defeat and many a crisis, often
 baffled,
 Here marching, ever marching on, a war fight out—aye
 here,
 To fiercer, weightier battles give expression.

TURN O LIBERTAD.

TURN O Libertad, for the war is over,
 From it and all henceforth expanding, doubting no
 more, resolute, sweeping the world,
 Turn from lands retrospective recording proofs of the
 past, [past,
 From the singers that sing the trailing glories of the
 From the chants of the feudal world, the triumphs of
 kings, slavery, caste,
 Turn to the world, the triumphs reserv'd and to come—
 give up that backward world,
 Leave to the singers of hitherto, give them the trailing
 past

But what remains remains for singers for you—wars to
 come are for you,
 (Lo, how the wars of the past have duly inured to you,
 and the wars of the present also inure ;)
 Then turn, and be not alarm'd O Libertad—turn your
 undying face,
 To where the future, greater than all the past,
 Is swiftly, surely preparing for you.

TO THE LEAVEN'D SOIL THEY TROD.

To the leaven'd soil they trod calling I sing for the last,
 (Forth from my tent emerging for good, loosing, untying
 the tent ropes,)
 In the freshness the forenoon air, in the far-stretching
 circuits and vistas again to peace restored,
 To the fiery fields emanative and the endless vistas
 beyond, to the South and the North,
 To the leaven'd soil of the general Western world to
 attest my songs,
 To the Alleghanian hills and the tireless Mississippi,
 To the rocks I calling sing, and all the trees in the
 woods, [spreading wide,
 To the plains of the poems of heroes, to the prairies
 To the far-off sea and the unseen winds, and the sane
 impalpable air ;
 And responding they answer all (but not in words,)
 The average earth, the witness of war and peace,
 acknowledges mutely,
 The prairie draws me close, as the father to bosom broad
 the son, [to the end,
 The Northern ice and rain that began me nourish me
 But the hot sun of the South is to fully ripen my songs.



*MEMORIES OF PRESIDENT
LINCOLN.*

WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORYARD
BLOOM'D.

1.

WHEN lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,
And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in
the night,
I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning
spring.

Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west,
And thought of him I love.

2.

O powerful western fallen star !
O shades of night—O moody, tearful night !
O great star disappear'd—O the black mirk that hides
the star ! [of me !
O cruel hands that hold me powerless—O helpless soul
O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul.

8.

In the dooryard fronting an old farm-house near the
white-wash'd palings,
Stands the lilac-bush tall-growing with heart-shaped
leaves of rich green,
With many a pointed blossom rising delicate, with the
perfume strong I love,
With every leaf a miracle—and from this bush in the
dooryard,
With delicate-colour'd blossoms and heart-shaped leaves
of rich green,
A sprig with its flower I break.

4.

In the swamp in secluded recesses,
A shy and hidden bird is warbling a song.

Solitary the thrush,
The hermit withdrawn to himself, avoiding the settle-
ments,
Sings by himself a song.

Song of the bleeding throat,
Death's outlet song of life (for well dear brother I know,
If thou wast not granted to sing thou would'st surely die.)

5.

Over the breast of the spring, the land, amid cities,
Amid lanes and through old woods, where lately the
violets peep'd from the ground, spotting the grey
debris,
Amid the grass in the fields each side of the lanes,
passing the endless grass,

Passing the yellow-spear'd wheat, every grain from its
shroud in the dark-brown fields uprisen,
Passing the apple-tree blows of white and pink in the
orchards,
Carrying a corpse to where it shall rest in the grave,
Night and day journeys a coffin.

6.

Coffin that passes through lanes and streets,
Through day and night with the great cloud darkening
the land,
With the pomp of the inloop'd flags with the cities
draped in black,
With the show of the States themselves as of crape-
veil'd women standing,
With processions long and winding and the flambeaus
of the night,
With the countless torches lit, with the silent sea of
faces and the unbared heads,
With the waiting depôt, the arriving coffin, and the
sombre faces,
With dirges through the night, with the thousand voices
rising strong and solemn,
With all the mournful voices of the dirges pour'd
around the coffin,
The dim-lit churches and the shuddering organs—where
amid these you journey,
With the tolling tolling bells' perpetual clang,
Here, coffin that slowly passes,
I give you my sprig of lilac.

7.

(Nor for you, for one alone,
Blossoms and branches green to coffins all I bring,

For fresh as the morning, thus would I chant a song for
you O sane and sacred death.

All over bouquets of roses,
O death, I cover you over with roses and early lilies,
But mostly and now the lilac that blooms the first,
Copious I break, I break the sprigs from the bushes,
With loaded arms I come, pouring for you,
For you and the coffins all of you O death.)

8.

O western orb sailing the heaven,
Now I know what you must have meant as a month
since I walk'd,
As I walk'd in silence the transparent shadowy night,
As I saw you had something to tell as you bent to me
night after night,
As you droop'd from the sky low down as if to my side,
(while the other stars all look'd on,)
As we wandered together the solemn night, (for some-
thing I know not what kept me from sleep,)
As the night advanced, and I saw on the rim of the west
how full you were of woe,
As I stood on the rising ground in the breeze in the cool
transparent night,
As I watch'd where you pass'd and was lost in the
netherward black of the night,
As my soul in its trouble dissatisfied sank, as where you
sad orb,
Concluded, dropt in the night, and was gone.

9.

Sing on there in the swamp,
O singer bashful and tender, I hear your notes, I hear
your call,

I hear, I come presently, I understand you,
But a moment I linger, for the lustrous star has detain'd
me,
The star my departing comrade holds and detains me.

10.

O how shall I warble myself for the dead one there I
loved ?
And how shall I deck my song for the large sweet soul
that has gone ?
And what shall my perfume be for the grave of him I
love ?

Sea-winds blown from east and west,
Blown from the Eastern sea and blown from the Western
sca, till there on the prairies meeting,
These and with these and the breath of my chant,
I'll perfume the grave of him I love.

11.

O what shall I hang on the chamber walls ?
And what shall the pictures be that I hang on the walls,
To adorn the burial-house of him I love ?

Pictures of growing spring and farms and homes,
With the Fourth-month eve at sundown, and the grey
smoke lucid and bright,
With floods of the yellow gold of the gorgeous, indolent,
sinking sun, burning, expanding the air,
With the fresh sweet herbage under foot, and the pale
green leaves of the trees prolific,
In the distance the flowing glaze, the breast of the river,
with a wind-dapple here and there.

With ranging hills on the banks, with many a line
 against the sky, and shadows,
And the city at hand with dwellings so dense, and stacks
 of chimneys,
And all the scenes of life and the workshops, and the
 workmen homeward returning.

12.

Lo, body and soul—this land,
My own Manhattan with spires, and the sparkling and
 hurrying tides, and the ships,
The varied and ample land, the South and the North in
 the light, Ohio's shores and flashing Missouri,
And ever the far-spreading prairies cover'd with grass
 and corn.

Lo, the most excellent sun so calm and haughty,
The violet and purple morn with just-felt breezes,
The gentle soft-born measureless light,
The miracle spreading bathing all, the fulfill'd noon,
The coming eve delicious, the welcome night and the
 stars,
Over my cities shining all, enveloping man and land.

13.

Sing on, sing on you grey-brown bird,
Sing from the swamps, the recesses, pour your chant from
 the bushes,
Limitless out of the dusk, out of the cedars and pines.

Sing on dearest brother, warble your reedy song,
Loud human song, with voice of uttermost woe.

O liquid and free and tender !
O wild and loose to my soul—O wondrous singer !

You only I hear—yet the star holds me, (but will soon
depart,)
Yet the lilac with mastering odour holds me.

14.

Now while I sat in the day and look'd forth,
In the close of the day with its light and the fields of
spring, and the farmers preparing their crops,
In the large unconscious scenery of my land with its
lakes and forests,
In the heavenly aerial beauty, (after the perturb'd winds
and the storms,)
Under the arching heavens of the afternoon swift passing,
and the voices of children and women,
The many-moving sea-tides, and I saw the ships how
they sail'd,
And the summer approaching with richness, and the
fields all busy with labour,
And the infinite separate houses, how they all went on,
each with its meals and minutia of daily usages,
And the streets how their throbbings throb'd, and the
cities pent—lo, then and there,
Falling upon them all and among them all, enveloping
me with the rest,
Appear'd the cloud, appear'd the long black trail,
And I knew death, its thought, and the sacred knowledge
of death.

Then with the knowledge of death as walking one side
of me,
And the thought of death close-walking the other side
of me,
And I in the middle as with companions, and as holding
the hands of companions,

I fled forth to the hiding receiving night that talks not,
Down to the shores of the water, the path by the swamp
 in the dimness,
To the solemn shadowy cedars and ghostly pines so still.

And the singer so shy to the rest receiv'd me,
The grey-brown bird I know receiv'd us comrades three,
And he sang the carol of death, and a verse for him I
 love.

From deep secluded recesses,
From the fragrant cedars and the ghostly pines so still,
Came the carol of the bird.

And the charm of the carol rapt me,
As I held as if by their hands my comrades in the night,
And the voice of my spirit tallied the song of the bird.

*Come lovely and soothing death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later delicate death.*

*Prais'd be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious,
And for love, sweet love—but praise! praise! praise!
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.*

*Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come,
 come unfalteringly.*

*Approach strong deliveress,
When it is so, when thou hast taken them I joyously sing
the dead,
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss O death.*

*From me to thee glad serenades,
Dances for thee I propose saluting thee, adornments and
feastings for thee,
And the sights of the open landscape and the high-spread
sky are fitting,
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful
night.*

*The night in silence under many a star,
The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose
voice I know,
And the soul turning to thee O vast and well-veil'd death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.*

*Over the tree-tops I float thee a song,
Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad fields
and the prairies wide,
Over the dense-pack'd cities all and the teeming wharves
and ways,
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee O death.*

15.

*To the tally of my soul,
Loud and strong kept up the grey-brown bird,
With pure deliberate notes spreading filling the night.*

*Loud in the pines and cedars dim,
Clear in the freshness moist and the swamp-perfume,
And I with my comrades there in the night.*

While my sight that was bound in my eyes unclosed,
As to long panoramas of visions.

And I saw askant the armies,
I saw as in noiseless dreams hundreds of battle-flags,
Borne through the smoke of the battles and pierced with
missiles I saw them,
And carried hither and yon through the smoke, and torn
and bloody,
And at last but a few shreds left on the staffs, (and all
in silence,)
And the staffs all splinter'd and broken.

I saw battle-corpses, myriads of them,
And the white skeletons of young men, I saw them,
I saw the debris and debris of all the slain soldiers of the
war,
But I saw they were not as was thought,
They themselves were fully at rest, they suffer'd not,
The living remain'd and suffer'd, the mother suffer'd,
And the wife and the child and the musing comrade
suffer'd,
And the armies that remain'd suffer'd.

16.

Passing the visions, passing the night,
Passing, unloosing the hold of my comrades' hands,
Passing the song of the hermit bird and the tallying
song of my soul,
Victorious song, death's outlet song, yet varying ever-
altering song,
As low and wailing, yet clear the notes, rising and
falling, flooding the night,

Sadly sinking and fainting, as warning and warning,
and yet again bursting with joy,
Covering the earth and filling the spread of the heaven,
As that powerful psalm in the night I heard from
recesses,
Passing, I leave thee lilac with heart-shaped leaves,
I leave thee there in the dooryard, blooming, returning
with spring.

I cease from my song for thee,
From my gaze on thee in the west, fronting the west,
communing with thee,
O comrade lustrous with silver face in the night.

Yet each to keep and all, retrievements out of the night,
The song, the wondrous chant of the grey-brown bird,
And the tallying chant, the echo arous'd in my soul,
With the lustrous and drooping star with the coun-
tenance full of woe,
With the holders holding my hand nearing the call of
the bird,
Comrades mine and I in the midst, and their memory
ever to keep, for the dead I loved so well,
For the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and lands—
and this for his dear sake,
Lilac and star and bird twined with the chant of my
soul,
There in the fragrant pines and the cedars dusk and
dim.



O CAPTAIN ! MY CAPTAIN !

O CAPTAIN ! my Captain ! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought
 is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all
 exulting, [daring ;
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and
 But O heart ! heart ! heart !
 O the bleeding drops of red,
 Where on the deck my Captain lies,
 Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain ! my Captain ! rise up and hear the bells ;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle
 trills,
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you
 the shores a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces
 turning ;
 Here Captain ! dear father !
 This arm beneath your head !
 It is some dream that on the deck,
 You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor
 will,
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed
 and done, [won ;
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object
 Exult O shores, and ring O bells !
 But I with mournful tread,
 Walk the deck my Captain lies,
 Fallen cold and dead.

HUSH'D BE THE CAMPS TO-DAY.

(May 4, 1865.)

HUSH'd be the camps to-day,
And soldiers let us drape our war-worn weapons,
And each with musing soul retire to celebrate
Our dear commander's death.

No more for him life's stormy conflicts,
Nor victory, nor defeat—no more time's dark events,
Charging like ceaseless clouds across the sky.

But sing poet in our name,
Sing of the love we bore him—because you, dweller in
camps, know it truly.

As they invault the coffin there,
Sing—as they close the doors of earth upon him—one
verse,
For the heavy hearts of soldiers.

THIS DUST WAS ONCE THE MAN.

THIS dust was once the man,
Gentle, plain, just and resolute, under whose cautious
hand,
Against the foulest crime in history known in any land
or age,
Was saved the Union of these States.



BY BLUE ONTARIO'S SHORE.

1.

By blue Ontario's shore,
As I mused of these warlike days and of peace return'd,
and the dead that return no more,
A Phantom gigantic superb, with stern visage accosted
me,
*Chant me the poem, it said, that comes from the soul of
America, chant me the carol of victory,
And strike me the marches of Libertad, marches more
powerful yet,
And sing me before you go the song of the throes of
Democracy.*

(Democracy, the destin'd conqueror, yet treacherous
lip-smiles everywhere,
And death and infidelity at every step.)

2.

A Nation announcing itself,
I myself make the only growth by which I can be
appreciated,
I reject none, accept all, then reproduce all in my own
forms.

A breed whose proof is in time and deeds,
What we are we are, nativity is answer enough to
objections,
We wield ourselves as a weapon is wielded,
We are powerful and tremendous in ourselves,
We are executive in ourselves, we are sufficient in the
variety of ourselves,
We are the most beautiful to ourselves and in ourselves,
We stand self-pois'd in the middle, branching thence
over the world,
From Missouri, Nebraska, or Kansas, laughing attacks
to scorn.

Nothing is sinful to us outside of ourselves,
Whatever appears, whatever does not appear, we are
beautiful or sinful in ourselves only.

(O Mother—O Sisters dear !
If we are lost, no victor else has destroy'd us,
It is by ourselves we go down to eternal night.)

3.

Have you thought there could be but a single supreme ?
There can be any number of supremes—one does not
countervail another any more than one eyesight
countervails another, or one life countervails
another.

All is eligible to all,
All is for individuals, all is for you,
No condition is prohibited, not God's or any.

All comes by the body, only health puts you rapport
with the universe.

Produce great Persons, the rest follows.

4.

Piety and conformity to them that like,
Peace, obesity, allegiance, to them that like,
I am he who tauntingly compels men, women, nations,
Crying, Leap from your seats and contend for your
lives !

I am he who walks the States with a barb'd tongue,
questioning every one I meet,
Who are you that wanted only to be told what you knew
before ?
Who are you that wanted only a book to join you in
your nonsense ?

(With pangs and cries as thine own O bearer of many
children,
These clamours wild to a race of pride I give.)

O lands, would you be freer than all that has ever been
before ?
If you would be freer than all that has been before, come
listen to me.

Fear grace, elegance, civilisation, delicatessen,
Fear the mellow sweet, the sucking of honey-juice,
Beware the advancing mortal ripening of Nature,
Beware what precedes the decay of the ruggedness of
states and men.

5.

Ages, precedents, have long been accumulating undi-
rected materials,
America brings builders, and brings its own styles.

The immortal poets of Asia and Europe have done their
work and pass'd to other spheres,
A work remains, the work of surpassing all they have
done.

America, curious toward foreign characters, stands by
its own at all hazards,
Stands removed, spacious, composite, sound, initiates
the true use of precedents,
Does not repel them or the past or what they have pro-
duced under their forms,
Takes the lesson with calmness, perceives the corpse
slowly borne from the house,
Perceives that it waits a little while in the door, that it
was fittest for its days,
That its life has descended to the stalwart and well-
shaped heir who approaches,
And that he shall be fittest for his days.

Any period one nation must lead,
One land must be the promise and reliance of the future.

These States are the amplest poem,
Here is not merely a nation but a teeming Nation of
nations,
Here the doings of men correspond with the broadcast
doings of the day and night,
Here is what moves in magnificent masses careless of par-
ticulars,
Here are the roughs, beards, friendliness, combativeness,
the soul loves,
Here the flowing trains, here the crowds, equality,
diversity, the soul loves.

6.

Land of lands and bards to corroborate !
Of them standing among them, one lifts to the light a
 west-bred face,
To him the hereditary countenance bequeath'd both
 mother's and father's,
His first parts substances, earth, water, animals, trees,
Built of the common stock, having room for far and
 near,
Used to dispense with other lands, incarnating this land,
Attracting it body and soul to himself, hanging on its
 neck with incomparable love,
Plunging his seminal muscle into its merits and demerits,
Making its cities, beginnings, events, diversities, wars,
 vocal in him,
Making its rivers, lakes, bays, embouchure in him,
Mississippi with yearly freshets and changing chutes,
 Columbia, Niagara, Hudson, spending themselves
 loving in him,
If the Atlantic coast stretch or the Pacific coast stretch,
 he stretching with them North or South,
Spanning between them East and West, and touching
 whatever is between them,
Growths growing from him to offset the growth of pine,
 cedar, hemlock, live-oak, locust, chestnut, hickory,
 cottonwood, orange, magnolia,
Tangles as tangled in him as any canebrake or swamp,
He likening sides and peaks of mountains, forests coated
 with northern transparent ice,
Off him pasturage sweet and natural as savanna, upland,
 prairie,
Through him flights, whirls, screams, answering those
of the fish-hawk, mocking-bird, night-heron, and
 eagle,

His spirit surrounding his country's spirit, unclosed to
good and evil,
Surrounding the essences of real things, old times and
present times,
Surrounding just found shores, islands, tribes of red
aborigines,
Weather-beaten vessels, landings, settlements, embryo
stature and muscle,
The haughty defiance of the Year One, war, peace, the
formation of the Constitution,
The separate States, the simple elastic scheme, the
immigrants,
The Union always swarming with blatherers and always
sure and impregnable,
The unsurvey'd interior, log-houses, clearings, wild
animals, hunters, trappers,
Surrounding the multiform agriculture, mines, tempera-
ture, the gestation of new States,
Congress convening every Twelfth-month, the members
duly coming up from the uttermost parts,
Surrounding the noble character of mechanics and
farmers, especially the young men,
Responding their manners, speech, dress, friendships, the
gait they have of persons who never knew how it
felt to stand in the presence of superiors,
The freshness and candour of their physiognomy, the
copiousness and decision of their phrenology,
The picturesque looseness of their carriage, their fierce-
ness when wrong'd,
The fluency of their speech, their delight in music, their
curiosity, good temper and open-handedness, the
whole composite make, [ness,
The prevailing ardour and enterprise, the large amative-
The perfect equality of the female with the male, the
fluid movement of the population

The superior marine, free commerce, fisheries, whaling,
gold-digging,
Wharf-hemm'd cities, railroad and steamboat lines
intersecting all points,
Factories, mercantile life, labour-saving machinery, the
Northeast, Northwest, Southwest,
Manhattan firemen, the Yankee swap, southern planta-
tion life,
Slavery—the murderous, treacherous conspiracy to raise
it upon the ruins of all the rest,
On and on to the grapple with it—Assassin ! then your
life or ours be the stake, and respite no more.

7.

(Lo, high toward heaven, this day,
Libertad, from the conqueress' field return'd,
I mark the new aureola around your head,
No more of soft astral, but dazzling and fierce,
With war's flames and the lambent lightnings playing,
And your port immovable where you stand,
With still the inextinguishable glance and the clinch'd
and lifted fist,
And your foot on the neck of the menacing one, the
scorner utterly crush'd beneath you,
The menacing arrogant one that strode and advanced
with his senseless scorn, bearing the murderous
knife,
The wide-swelling one, the braggart that would yester-
day do so much,
To-day a carrion dead and damn'd, the despis'd of all
the earth,
An offal rank, to the dunghill maggots spurn'd.)

8.

Others take finish, but the Republic is ever constructive
and ever keeps vista,
Others adorn the past, but you O days of the present, I
adorn you,
O days of the future I believe in you—I isolate myself
for your sake,
O America because you build for mankind I build for you,
O well-beloved stone-cutters, I lead them who plan with
decision and science,
Lead the present with friendly hand toward the future.

(Bravas to all impulses sending sane children to the
next age !
But damn that which spends itself with no thought of the
stain, pains, dismay, feebleness, it is bequeathing.)

9.

I listened to the Phantom by Ontario's shore,
I heard the voice arising demanding bards,
By them all native and grand, by them alone can these
States be fused into the compact organism of a
Nation.

To hold men together by paper and seal or by compulsion
is no account,
That only holds men together which aggregates all in a
living principle, as the hold of the limbs of the
body or the fibres of plants.

Of all races and eras these States with veins full of
poetical stuff most need poets, and are to have the
greatest, and use them the greatest,

Their Presidents shall not be their common referee so much as their poets shall.

(Soul of love and tongue of fire !
 Eye to pierce the deepest deeps and sweep the world !
 Ah Mother, prolific and full in all besides, yet how long
 barren, barren ?)

10.

Of these States the poet is the equable man,
 Not in him but off from him things are grotesque,
 eccentric, fail of their full returns,
 Nothing out of its place is good, nothing in its place
 is bad,

He bestows on every object or quality its fit proportion,
 neither more nor less,

He is the arbiter of the diverse, he is the key,

He is the equaliser of his age and land,

He supplies what wants supplying, he checks what wants
 checking,

In peace out of him speaks the spirit of peace, large,
 rich, thrifty, building populous towns, encouraging
 agriculture, arts, commerce, lighting the study of
 man, the soul, health, immortality, government,

In war he is the best backer of the war, he fetches
 artillery as good as the engineer's, he can make
 every word he speaks draw blood,

The years straying toward infidelity he withholds by his
 steady faith,

He is no arguer, he is judgment, (Nature accepts him
 absolutely,)

He judges not as the judge judges but as the sun falling
 round a helpless thing,

As he sees the farthest he has the most faith,

His thoughts are the hymns of the praise of things,

In the dispute on God and eternity he is silent,
He sees eternity less like a play with a prologue and
denouement,
He sees eternity in men and women, he does not see
men and women as dreams or dots.

For the great Idea, the idea of perfect and free
individuals,
For that, the bard walks in advance, leader of leaders,
The attitude of him cheers up slaves and horrifies foreign
despots.

Without extinction is Liberty, without retrograde is
Equality,
They live in the feelings of young men and the best
women,
(Not for nothing have the indomitable heads of the earth
been always ready to fall for Liberty.)

11.

For the great Idea,
That, O my brethren, that is the mission of poets.

Songs of stern defiance ever ready,
Songs of the rapid arming and the march,
The flag of peace quick-folded, and instead the flag we
know,
Warlike flag of the great Idea.

(Angry cloth I saw there leaping !
I stand again in leaden rain your flapping folds saluting,
I sing you over all, flying beckoning through the fight—
O the hard-contested fight !
The cannons ope their rosy-flashing muzzles—the hurtled
balls scream,

The battle-front forms amid the smoke—the volleys
 pour incessant from the line,
 Hark, the ringing word, *Charge*—now the tussle and the
 furious maddening yells,
 Now the corpses tumble curl'd upon the ground,
 Cold, cold in death, for precious life of you,
 Angry cloth I saw there leaping.)

12.

Are you he who would assume a place to teach or be a
 poet here in the States?
 'The place is august, the terms obdurate.

Who would assume to teach here may well prepare
 himself body and mind, [lithe himself,
 He may well survey, ponder, arm, fortify, harden, make
 He shall surely be question'd beforehand by me with
 many and stern questions.

Who are you indeed who would talk or sing to America?
 Have you studied out the land, its idioms and men?
 Have you learn'd the physiology, phrenology, politics,
 geography, pride, freedom, friendship of the land?
 its substratums and objects?

Have you consider'd the organic compact of the first day
 of the first year of Independence, sign'd by the
 Commissioners, ratified by the States, and read by
 Washington at the head of the army?

Have you possess'd yourself of the Federal Constitution?
 Do you see who have left all feudal processes and poems
 behind them, and assumed the poems and processes
 of Democracy?

Are you faithful to things? do you teach what the land
 and sea, the bodies of men, womanhood, amative-
 ness, heroic angers, teach?

Have you sped through fleeting customs, popularities?
Can you hold your hand against all seductions, follies,
whirls, fierce contentions? are you very strong? are
you really of the whole People? [religion?
Are you not of some coterie? some school or mere
Are you done with reviews and criticisms of life?
animating now to life itself? [States?
Have you vivified yourself from the maternity of these
Have you too the old ever-fresh forbearance and
impartiality?
Do you hold the like love for those hardening to
maturity? for the last-born? little and big? and
for the errant?

What is this you bring my America?
Is it uniform with my country?
Is it not something that has been better told or done
before? [ship?
Have you not imported this or the spirit of it in some
Is it not a mere tale? a rhyme? a prettiness?—is the
good old cause in it?
Has it not dangled long at the heels of the poets,
politicians, literats, of enemies' lands?
Does it not assume that what is notoriously gone is
still here?
Does it answer universal needs? will it improve
manners?
Does it sound with trumpet-voice the proud victory of
the Union in that secession war?
Can your performance face the open fields and the
seaside?
Will it absorb into me as I absorb food, air, to appear
again in my strength, gait, face?
Have real employments contributed to it? original
makers, not mere amanuenses?

Does it meet modern discoveries, calibres, facts, face to face!

What does it mean to American persons, progresses, times! Chicago, Kansas, Arkansas!

Does it see behind the apparent custodians the real custodians standing, menacing, silent, the mechanics, Manufacturers, Western men, Southerners, significant alike in their apathy, and in the promptness of their love!

Does it see what finally befalls, and has always finally befallen, each temporiser, patcher, outsider, partialist, alarmist, infidel, who has ever ask'd any thing of America!

What mocking and scornful negligence!

The track strew'd with the dust of skeletons,
By the roadside others disdainfully toss'd.

13.

Rhymes and rhymers pass away, poems distill'd from poems pass away. [ashes,

The swarms of reflectors and the police pass, and leave Admirers, Importers, obedient persons, make but the soil of literature,

America includes itself, give it time, no disguise can deceive it or conceal from it, it is impassive enough, Only toward the likes of itself will it advance to meet them,

If its poets appear it will in due time advance to meet them, there is no fear of mistake,

(The proof of a poet shall be sternly deferr'd till his country absorbs him as affectionately as he has absorbed it.)

He masters whose spirit masters, he tastes sweetest who results sweetest in the long run,

The blood of the brawn beloved of time is unconstraint ;
In the need of songs, philosophy, an appropriate native
grand-opera, shipcraft, any craft,
He or she is greatest who contributes the greatest
original practical example.

Already a nonchalant breed, silently emerging, appears
on the streets,
People's lips salute only doers, lovers, satisfiers, positive
knowers, [is done,
There will shortly be no more priests, I say their work
Death is without emergencies here, but life is perpetual
emergencies here,
Are your body, days, manners, superb ? after death you
shall be superb,
Justice, health, self-esteem, clear the way with irresist-
ible power ;
How dare you place anything before a man ?

14.

Fall behind me States !
A man before all—myself, typical, before all.
Give me the pay I have served for,
Give me to sing the songs of the great Idea, take all the
rest,
I have loved the earth, sun, animals, I have despised
riches,
I have given alms to every one that ask'd, stood up for
the stupid and crazy, devoted my income and labour
to others,
Hated tyrants, argued not concerning God, had patience
and indulgence toward the people, taken off my
hat to nothing known or unknown,
Gone freely with powerful uneducated persons and with
the young, and with the mothers of families,

Read these leaves to myself in the open air, tried them
 by trees, stars, rivers, [body,
 Dismiss'd whatever insulted my own soul or defiled my
 Claim'd nothing to myself which I have not carefully
 claim'd for others on the same terms,
 Sped to the camps, and comrades found and accepted
 from every State,
 (Upon this breast has many a dying soldier lean'd to
 breathe his last,
 This arm, this hand, this voice, have nourish'd, rais'd,
 restor'd,
 To life recalling many a prostrate form ;)
 I am willing to wait to be understood by the growth of
 the taste of myself,
 Rejecting none, permitting all.

(Say O Mother, have I not to your thought been
 faithful ?
 Have I not through life kept you and yours before me ?)

15.

I swear I begin to see the meaning of these things,
 It is not the earth, it is not America who is so great,
 It is I who am great or to be great, it is You up there,
 or any one,
 It is to walk rapidly through civilisations, governments,
 theories,
 Through poems, pageants, shows, to form individuals.

Underneath all, individuals,
 I swear nothing is good to me now that ignores
 individuals,
 The American compact is altogether with individuals,
 The only government is that which makes minute of
 individuals,

The whole theory of the universe is directed unerringly
to one single individual—namely to You.

(Mother! with subtle sense severe, with the naked
sword in your hand,
I saw you at last refuse to treat but directly with
individuals.)

16.

Underneath all, Nativity,
I swear I will stand by my own nativity, pious or
impious so be it;
I swear I am charm'd with nothing except nativity,
Men, women, cities, nations, are only beautiful from
nativity.

Underneath all is the Expression of love for men and
women,
(I swear I have seen enough of mean and impotent
modes of expressing love for men and women,
After this day I take my own modes of expressing love
for men and women.)

I swear I will have each quality of my race in myself,
(Talk as you like, he only suits these States whose
manners favour the audacity and sublime turbulence
of the States.)

Underneath the lessons of things, spirits, Nature,
governments, ownerships, I swear I perceive other
lessons,
Underneath all to me is myself, to you yourself, (the
same monotonous old song.)

17.

O I see flashing that this America is only you and me,
Its power, weapons, testimony, are you and me,

Its crimes, lies, thefts, defections, are you and me,
Its Congress is you and me, the officers, capitol, armies,
ships, are you and me,
Its endless gestations of new States are you and me,
The war, (that war so bloody and grim, the war I will
henceforth forget,) was you and me,
Natural and artificial are you and me,
Freedom, language, poems, employments, are you and
me,
Past, present, future, are you and me.

I dare not shirk any part of myself,
Not any part of America good or bad,
Not to build for that which builds for mankind,
Not to balance ranks, complexions, creeds, and the
sexes,
Not to justify science nor the march of equality,
Nor to feed the arrogant blood of the brawn belov'd of
time.

I am for those that have never been master'd,
For men and women whose tempers have never been
master'd,
For those whom laws, theories, conventions, can never
master.

I am for those who walk abreast with the whole earth,
Who inaugurate one to inaugurate all.

I will not be outfaced by irrational things,
I will penetrate what it is in them that is sarcastic upon
me,
I will make cities and civilisations defer to me,
This is what I have learned from America—it is the
amount, and it I teach again.

(Democracy, while weapons were everywhere aimed at
your breast,
I saw you serenely give birth to immortal children, saw
in dreams your dilating form,
Saw you with spreading mantle covering the world.)

18.

I will confront these shows of the day and night,
I will know if I am to be less than they,
I will see if I am not as majestic as they,
I will see if I am not as subtle and real as they,
I will see if I am to be less generous than they,
I will see if I have no meaning, while the houses and
ships have meaning,
I will see if the fishes and birds are to be enough for
themselves, and I am not to be enough for myself.

I match my spirit against yours you orbs, growths,
mountains, brutes,
Copious as you are I absorb you all in myself, and
become the master myself,
America isolated yet embodying all, what is it finally
except myself?
These States, what are they except myself?

I know now why the earth is gross, tantalising, wicked,
it is for my sake,
I take you specially to be mine, you terrible, rude forms.

(Mother, bend down, bend close to me your face,
I know not what these plots and wars and deferments
are for,
I know not fruition's success, but I know that through
war and crime your work goes on, and must yet go
on.)

19.

Thus by blue Ontario's shore,
While the winds fann'd me and the waves came trooping
toward me,
I thrill'd with the power's pulsations, and the charm of
my theme was upon me,
Till the tissues that held me parted their ties upon me.
And I saw the free souls of poets,
The loftiest bards of past ages strode before me,
Strange large men, long unwoke, undisclosed, were
disclosed to me.

20.

O my rapt verse, my call, mock me not !
Not for the bards of the past, not to invoke them have
I launch'd you forth,
Not to call even those lofty bards here by Ontario's
shores,
Have I sung so capricious and loud my savage song.

Bards for my own land only I invoke,
(For the war, the war is over, the field is clear'd,)
Till they strike up marches henceforth triumphant and
onward,
To cheer O Mother your boundless expectant soul.

Bards of the great Idea ! bards of the peaceful inven-
tions ! (for the war, the war is over !)
Yet bards of latent armies, a million soldiers waiting
ever-ready,
Bards with songs as from burning coals or the lightning's
fork'd stripes !
Ample Ohio's, Kanada's bards—bards of California !
inland bards—bards of the war !
You by my charm I invoke.



AUTUMN RIVULETS.

AS CONSEQUENT FROM STORE OF SUMMER RAINS.

As consequent from store of summer rains,
Or wayward rivulets in autumn flowing,
Or many a herb-lined brook's reticulations,
Or subterranean sea-rills making for the sea,
Songs of continued years I sing.

Life's ever-modern rapids first, (soon, soon to blend
With the old streams of death.)

Some threading Ohio's farm fields or the woods,
Some down Colorado's cañons from sources of perpetual
snow,
Some half-hid in Oregon, or away southward in Texas,
Some in the north finding their way to Erie, Niagara,
Ottawa,
Some to Atlantica's bays, and so to the great salt brine.

In you whoe'er you are my book perusing,
In I myself, in all the world, these currents flowing,
All, all toward the mystic ocean tending.

Currents for starting a continent new,
Overtures sent to the solid out of the liquid,
Fusion of ocean and land, tender and pensive waves,
(Not safe and peaceful only, waves rous'd and ominous
too, [whence ?
Out of the depths the storm's abysmic waves, who knows
Raging over the vast, with many a broken spar and
tatter'd sail.)

Or from the sea of Time, collecting vasting all, I bring
A windrow-drift of weeds and shells.

O little shells, so curious-convolute, so limpid-cold and
voiceless, [held,
Will you not little shells to the tympan of temples
Murmurs and echoes still call up, eternity's music faint
and far,
Wafted inland, sent from Atlantica's rim, strains for the
soul of the prairies,
Whisper'd reverberations, chords for the ear of the West
joyously sounding,
Your tidings old, yet ever new and untranslatable,
Infinitesimals out of my life, and many a life,
(For not my life and years alone I give—all, all I give,)
These waifs from the deep, cast high and dry,
Wash'd on America's shores ?

THE RETURN OF THE HEROES.

1.

FOR the lands and for these passionate days and for
myself,
Now I awhile retire to thee O soil of autumn fields,

Reclining on thy breast, giving myself to thee,
Answering the pulses of thy sane and equable heart,
Tuning a verse for thee.

O earth that hast no voice, confide to me a voice,
O harvest of my lands—O boundless summer growths,
O lavish brown parturient earth—O infinite teeming
womb,
A song to narrate thee.

2.

Ever upon this stage
Is acted God's calm annual drama,
Gorgeous processions, songs of birds,
Sunrise that fullest feeds and freshens most the soul,
The heaving sea, the waves upon the shore, the musical,
strong waves,
The woods, the stalwart trees, the slender, tapering trees,
The liliput countless armies of the grass,
The heat, the showers, the measureless pasturages,
The scenery of the snows, the winds' free orchestra,
The stretching light-hung roof of clouds, the clear
cerulean and the silvery fringes,
The high dilating stars, the placid beckoning stars,
The moving flocks and herds, the plains and emerald
meadows,
The shows of all the varied lands and all the growths
and products.

3.

Fecund America—to-day,
Thou art all over set in births and joys!
Thou groan'st with riches, thy wealth clothes thee as a
swathing-garment,
Thou laughest loud with ache of great possessions,
A myriad-twining life like interlacing vines binds all
thy vast demesne;

As some huge ship freighted to water's edge thou ridest
into port,
As rain falls from the heaven and vapours rise from
earth, so have the precious values fallen upon thee
and risen out of thee ;
Thou envy of the globe ! thou miracle !
Thou, bathed, choked, swimming in plenty,
Thou lucky Mistress of the tranquil barns,
Thou Prairie Dame that sittest in the middle and lookest
out upon thy world, and lookest East and lookest
West,
Dispensatress, that by a word givest a thousand miles,
a million farms, and missest nothing,
Thou all-acceptress—thou hospitable, (thou only art
hospitable as God is hospitable.)

4.

When late I sang sad was my voice,
Sad were the shows around me with deafening noises of
hatred and smoke of war ;
In the midst of the conflict, the heroes, I stood,
Or pass'd with slow step through the wounded and dying.

But now I sing not war,
Nor the measured march of soldiers, nor the tents of
camps,
Nor the regiments hastily coming up deploying in line
of battle ;
No more the sad, unnatural shows of war.

Ask'd room those flushed immortal ranks, the first forth-
stepping armies !
Ask room alas the ghastly ranks, the armies dread that
follow'd.

(Pass, pass, ye proud brigades, with your tramping
sinewy legs,
With your shoulders young and strong, with your knap-
sacks and your muskets ;
How elate I stood and watch'd you, where starting off
you march'd.

Pass—then rattle drums again,
For an army heaves in sight, O another gathering army,
Swarming, trailing on the rear, O you dread accruing
army,
O you regiments so piteous, with your mortal diarrhœa,
with your fever,
O my land's maim'd darlings, with the plenteous bloody
bandage and the crutch,
Lo, your pallid army follows.)

5.

But on these days of brightness,
On the far-stretching beauteous landscape, the roads and
lanes, the high-piled farm-waggon, and the fruits
and barns,
Should the dead intrude ?

Ah the dead to me mar not, they fit well in Nature,
They fit very well in the landscape under the trees and
grass,
And along the edge of the sky in the horizon's far
margin.

Nor do I forget you Departed,
Nor in winter or summer my lost ones,
But most in the open air as now when my soul is rapt
and at peace, like pleasing phantoms,
Your memories rising glide silently by me.

6.

I saw the day the return of the heroes,
(Yet the heroes never surpass'd shall never return,
Them that day I saw not.)

I saw the interminable corps, I saw the processions of
armies,
I saw them approaching, defiling by with divisions,
Streaming northward, their work done, camping awhile
in clusters of mighty camps.

No holiday soldiers—youthful, yet veterans,
Worn, swart, handsome, strong, of the stock of home-
stead and workshop,
Harden'd of many a long campaign and sweaty march,
Inured on many a hard-fought bloody field.

A pause—the armies wait,
A million flush'd embattled conquerors wait,
The world too waits, then soft as breaking night and
sure as dawn,
They melt, they disappear.

Exult O lands ! victorious lands !
Not there your victory on those red shuddering fields,
But here and hence your victory.

Melt, melt away ye armies—disperse ye blue-clad
soldiers,
Resolve ye back again, give up for good your deadly
arms,
Other the arms the fields henceforth for you, or South
or North,
With saner wars, sweet wars, life-giving wars.

7.

Loud O my throat, and clear O soul !
The season of thanks and the voice of full-yielding,
The chant of joy and power for boundless fertility.

All till'd and untill'd fields expand before me,
I see the true arenas of my race, or first or last,
Man's innocent and strong arenas.

I see the heroes at other toils,
I see well-wielded in their hands the better weapons.

I see where the Mother of All,
With full-spanning eye gazes forth, dwells long,
And counts the varied gathering of the products.

Busy the far, the sunlit panorama,
Prairie, orchard, and yellow grain of the North,
Cotton and rice of the South and Louisianian cane,
Open unseeded fallows, rich fields of clover and timothy,
Kine and horses feeding, and droves of sheep and swine,
And many a stately river flowing and many a jocund
brook,
And healthy uplands with herby-perfumed breezes,
And the good green grass, that delicate miracle the
ever-recurring grass.

8.

Toil on heroes ! harvest the products !
Not alone on those warlike fields the Mother of All,
With dilated form and lambent eyes watch'd you.

Toil on heroes ! toil well ! handle the weapons well !
The Mother of All, yet here as ever she watches you.

Well-pleased America thou beholdest,
Over the fields of the West those crawling monsters,
The human-divine inventions, the labour-saving imple-
ments ;

Beholdest moving in every direction imbued as with life
the revolving hay-rakes, [machines,
The steam-power reaping-machines and the horse-power
The engines, thrashers of grain and cleaners of grain,
well separating the straw, the nimble work of the
patent pitchfork,
Beholdest the newer saw-mill, the southern cotton-gin,
and the rice-cleanser.

Beneath thy look O Maternal,
With these and else and with their own strong hands the
heroes harvest.

All gather and all harvest,
Yet but for thee O Powerful, not a scythe might swing
as now in security,
Not a maize-stack dangle as now its silken tassels in
peace.

Under thee only they harvest, even but a wisp of hay
under thy great face only,
Harvest the wheat of Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin, every
barbed spear under thee,
Harvest the maize of Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee,
each ear in its light-green sheath,
Gather the hay to its myriad mows in the odorous
tranquil barns,
Oats to their bins, the white potato, the buckwheat of
Michigan, to theirs ;
Gather the cotton in Mississippi or Alabama, dig and
hoard the golden the sweet potato of Georgia and
the Carolinas,

Clip the wool of California or Pennsylvania,
Cut the flax in the Middle States, or hemp or tobacco in
the Borders,
Pick the pea and the bean, or pull apples from the trees
or bunches of grapes from the vines, [South,
Or aught that ripens in all these States or North or
Under the beaming sun and under thee.

THERE WAS A CHILD WENT FORTH.

THERE was a child went forth every day,
And the first object that he look'd upon, that object he
became,
And that object became part of him for the day or a
certain part of the day,
Or for many years or stretching cycles of years.

The early lilacs became part of this child,
And grass and white and red morning-glories, and white
and red clover, and the song of the phœbe-bird,
And the Third-month lambs and the sow's pink-faint
litter, and the mare's foal and the cow's calf,
And the noisy brood of the barnyard or by the mire of
the pond-side,
And the fish suspending themselves so curiously below
there, and the beautiful curious liquid,
And the water plants with their graceful flat heads, all
became part of him.

The field-sprouts of Fourth-month and Fifth-month
became part of him,
Winter-grain sprouts and those of the light-yellow corn,
and the esculent roots of the garden,

And the apple-trees cover'd with blossoms and the fruit
afterward, and wood-berries, and the commonest
weeds by the road,
And the old drunkard staggering home from the out-
house of the tavern whence he had lately risen,
And the schoolmistress that pass'd on her way to the
school, [boys,
And the friendly boys that pass'd, and the quarrelsome
And the tidy and fresh-cheek'd girls, and the barefoot
negro boy and girl,
And all the changes of city and country wherever he
went.

His own parents, he that had father'd him and she that
had conceiv'd him in her womb and birth'd him,
They gave this child more of themselves than that,
They gave him afterward every day, they became part
of him.

The mother at home quietly placing the dishes on the
supper-table,
The mother with mild words, clean cap and gown, a
wholesome odour falling off her person and clothes as
she walks by,
The father, strong, self-sufficient, manly, mean, anger'd,
unjust,
The blow, the quick loud word, the tight bargain, the
crafty lure,
The family usages, the language, the company, the
furniture, the yearning and swelling heart,
Affection that will not be gainsay'd, the sense of what
is real, the thought if after all it should prove
unreal,
The doubts of day-time and the doubts of night-time,
the curious whether and how,

Whether that which appears so is so, or is it all flashes
 and specks?
 Men and women crowding fast in the streets, if they are
 not flashes and specks what are they?
 The streets themselves and the façades of houses, and
 goods in the windows,
 Vehicles, teams, the heavy-plank'd wharves, the huge
 crossing at the ferries,
 The village on the highland seen from afar at sunset,
 the river between,
 Shadows, aureola and mist, the light falling on roofs and
 gables of white or brown two miles off,
 The schooner near by sleepily dropping down the tide,
 the little boat slack-tow'd astern,
 The hurrying tumbling waves, quick-broken crests,
 slapping,
 The strata of colour'd clouds, the long bar of maroon-tint
 away solitary by itself, the spread of purity it lies
 motionless in,
 The horizon's edge, the flying sea-crow, the fragrance of
 salt marsh and shore mud,
 These became part of that child who went forth every
 day, and who now goes, and will always go forth
 every day.

OLD IRELAND.

FAR hence amid an isle of wondrous beauty,
 Crouching over a grave an ancient sorrowful mother,
 Once a queen, now lean and tatter'd seated on the
 ground,
 Her old white hair drooping dishevell'd round her
 shoulders,
 At her feet fallen an unused royal harp,

Long silent, she too long silent, mourning her shrouded
 hope and heir,
 Of all the earth her heart most full of sorrow because
 most full of love.

Yet a word ancient mother,
 You need crouch there no longer on the cold ground with
 forehead between your knees,
 O you need not sit there veil'd in your old white hair so
 dishevell'd,
 For know you the one you mourn is not in that grave,
 It was an illusion, the son you love was not really dead,
 The Lord is not dead, he is risen again young and strong
 in another country,
 Even while you wept there by your fallen harp by the
 grave,
 What you wept for was translated, pass'd from the grave,
 The winds favour'd and the sea sail'd it,
 And now with rosy and new blood,
 Moves to-day in a new country.

THE CITY DEAD-HOUSE.

By the city dead-house by the gate,
 As idly sauntering wending my way from the clangour,
 I curious pause, for lo, an outcast form, a poor dead
 prostitute brought,
 Her corpse they deposit unclaim'd, it lies on the damp
 brick pavement, [it alone,
 The divine woman, her body, I see the body, I look on
 That house once full of passion and beauty, all else I
 notice not,
 Nor stillness so cold, nor running water from faucet, nor
 odours morbidic impress me,

But the house alone—that wondrous house—that delicate
fair house—that ruin !
That immortal house more than all the rows of dwellings
ever built !
Or white-domed capitol with majestic figure surmounted,
or all the old high-spired cathedrals,
That little house alone more than them all—poor,
desperate house !
Fair, fearful wreck—tenement of a soul—itself a soul,
Unclaim'd, avoided house—take one breath from my
tremulous lips,
Take one tear dropt aside as I go for thought of you,
Dead house of love—house of madness and sin, crumbled,
crush'd,
House of life, erewhile talking and laughing—but ah,
poor house, dead even then,
Months, years, an echoing, garnish'd house—but dead,
dead, dead.

THIS COMPOST.

1.

SOMETHING startles me where I thought I was safest,
I withdraw from the still woods I loved,
I will not go now on the pastures to walk,
I will not strip the clothes from my body to meet my
lover the sea,
I will not touch my flesh to the earth as to other flesh to
renew me.

O how can it be that the ground itself does not sicken ?
How can you be alive you growths of spring ?
How can you furnish health you blood of herbs, roots,
orchards, grain ?

Are they not continually putting distemper'd corpses
within you?

Is not every continent work'd over and over with sour
dead?

Where have you disposed of their carcasses?

Those drunkards and gluttons of so many generations?

Where have you drawn off all the foul liquid and meat?

I do not see any of it upon you to-day, or perhaps I am
deceiv'd,

I will run a furrow with my plough, I will press my
spade through the sod and turn it up underneath,

I am sure I shall expose some of the foul meat.

2.

Behold this compost! behold it well!

Perhaps every mite has once form'd part of a sick
person—yet behold!

The grass of spring covers the prairies,

The bean bursts noiselessly through the mould in the
garden,

The delicate spear of the onion pierces upward,

The apple-buds cluster together on the apple-branches,

The resurrection of the wheat appears with pale visage
out of its graves, [tree,

The tinge awakes over the willow-tree and the mulberry-

The he-birds carol mornings and evenings while the
she-birds sit on their nests,

The young of poultry break through the hatch'd eggs,

The new-born of animals appear, the calf is dropt from
the cow, the colt from the mare,

Out of its little hill faithfully rise the potato's dark
green leaves,

Out of its hill rises the yellow maize-stalk, the lilac's
bloom in the dooryards,

The summer growth is innocent and disdainful above all
those strata of sour dead.

What chemistry !

That the winds are really not infectious,

That this is no cheat, this transparent green-wash of the
sea which is so amorous after me,

That it is safe to allow it to lick my naked body all
over with its tongues,

That it will not endanger me with the fevers that have
deposited themselves in it,

That all is clean forever and forever,

That the cool drink from the well tastes so good,

That blackberries are so flavorful and juicy,

That the fruits of the apple-orchard and the orange-
orchard, that melons, grapes, peaches, plums, will
none of them poison me,

That when I recline on the grass I do not catch any
disease,

Though probably every spear of grass rises out of what
was once a catching disease.

Now I am terrified at the Earth, it is that calm and
patient,

It grows such sweet things out of such corruptions,

It turns harmless and stainless on its axis, with such
endless successions of diseas'd corpses,

It distills such exquisite winds out of such infused feter,

It renews with such unwitting looks its prodigal, annual,
sumptuous crops,

It gives such divine materials to men, and accepts such
leavings from them at last.

TO A FOIL'D EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONAIRE.

COURAGE yet, my brother or my sister !
Keep on—Liberty is to be subserv'd whatever occurs ;
That is nothing that is quell'd by one or two failures, or
any number of failures,
Or by the indifference or ingratitude of the people, or by
any unfaithfulness,
Or the show of the tushes of powers, soldiers, cannon,
penal statutes.

What we believe in waits latent forever through all the
continents,
Invites no one, promises nothing, sits in calmness and
light, is positive and composed, knows no dis-
couragement,
Waiting patiently, waiting its time.

(Not songs of loyalty alone are these,
But songs of insurrection also,
For I am the sworn poet of every dauntless rebel the
world over,
And he going with me leaves peace and routine behind
him,
And stakes his life to be lost at any moment.)

The battle rages with many a loud alarm and frequent
advance and retreat,
The infidel triumphs, or supposes he triumphs,
The prison, scaffold, garrote, handcuffs, iron necklace
and lead-balls do their work,
The named and unnamed heroes pass to other spheres,
The great speakers and writers are exiled, they lie sick
in distant lands,
The cause is asleep, the strongest throats are choked
with their own blood,

The young men droop their eyelashes toward the ground
when they meet ;

But for all this Liberty has not gone out of the place,
nor the infidel enter'd into full possession.

When liberty goes out of a place it is not the first to go,
nor the second or third to go,

It waits for all the rest to go, it is the last.

When there are no more memories of heroes and martyrs,
And when all life and all the souls of men and women
are discharged from any part of the earth,

Then only shall liberty or the idea of liberty be dis-
charged from that part of the earth,

And the infidel come into full possession.

Then courage European revolter, revoltress !

For till all ceases neither must you cease.

I do not know what you are for (I do not know what I
am for myself, nor what any thing is for,)

But I will search carefully for it even in being foil'd,

In defeat, poverty, misconception, imprisonment—for
they too are great.

Did we think victory great ?

So it is—but now it seems to me, when it cannot be
help'd, that defeat is great,

And that death and dismay are great.

UNNAMED LANDS.

NATIONS ten thousand years before these States, and
many times ten thousand years before these States,
Garner'd clusters of ages that men and women like us
grew up and travell'd their course and pass'd on,

What vast-built cities, what orderly republics, what
 pastoral tribes and nomads, [others,
 What histories, rulers, heroes, perhaps transcending all
 What laws, customs, wealth, arts, traditions,
 What sort of marriage, what costumes, what physiology
 and phrenology,
 What of liberty and slavery among them, what they
 thought of death and the soul,
 Who were witty and wise, who beautiful and poetic, who
 brutish and undevelop'd,
 Not a mark, not a record remains—and yet all remains.

O I know that those men and women were not for
 nothing, any more than we are for nothing,
 I know that they belong to the scheme of the world every
 bit as much as we now belong to it.

Afar they stand, yet near to me they stand,
 Some with oval countenances learn'd and calm,
 Some naked and savage, some like huge collections of
 insects,
 Some in tents, herdsmen, patriarchs, tribes, horsemen,
 Some prowling through woods, some living peaceably on
 farms, labouring, reaping, filling barns,
 Some traversing paved avenues, amid temples, palaces,
 factories, shows, libraries, courts, theatres, wonder-
 ful monuments.

Are those billions of men really gone ? [gone ?
 Are those women of the old experience of the earth
 Do their lives, cities, arts, rest only with us ?
 Did they achieve nothing for good for themselves ?

I believe of all those men and women that filled the
 unnamed lands, every one exists this hour here or
 elsewhere, invisible to us,

In exact proportion to what he or she grew from in life,
and out of what he or she did, felt, became, loved,
sinn'd, in life.

I believe that was not the end of those nations or any
person of them, any more than this shall be the
end of my nation, or of me ;

Of their languages, governments, marriage, literature,
products, games, wars, manners, crimes, prisons,
slaves, heroes, poets,

I suspect their results curiously await in the yet unseen
world, counterparts of what accrued to them in the
seen world,

I suspect I shall meet them there, [unnamed lands.

I suspect I shall there find each old particular of those

SONG OF PRUDENCE.

MANHATTAN'S streets I saunter'd pondering,
On Time, Space, Reality—on such as these, and abreast
with them Prudence.

The last explanation always remains to be made about
prudence,

Little and large alike drop quietly aside from the
prudence that suits immortality.

The soul is of itself,

All verges to it, all has reference to what ensues,

All that a person does, says, thinks, is of consequence,

Not a move can a man or woman make, that effects him
or her in a day, month, any part of the direct life-
time, or the hour of death,

But the same affects him or her onward afterward
through the indirect lifetime.

The indirect is just as much as the direct,
The spirit receives from the body just as much as it gives
to the body, if not more.

Not one word or deed, not venereal sore, discolouration,
privacy of the onanist,
Putridity of gluttons or rum-drinkers, pecculation,
cunning, betrayal, murder, seduction, prostitution,
But has results beyond death as really as before death.

Charity and personal force are the only investments
worth any thing.

No specification is necessary, all that a male or female
does, that is vigorous, benevolent, clean, is so much
profit to him or her,
In the unshakable order of the universe and through the
whole scope of it forever.

Who has been wise receives interest,
Savage, felon, President, judge, farmer, sailor, mechanic,
literate, young, old, it is the same,
The interest will come round—all will come round.

Singly, wholly, to affect now, affected their time, will
forever affect, all of the past and all of the present
and all of the future,

All the brave actions of war and peace,
All help given to relatives, strangers, the poor, old,
sorrowful, young children, widows, the sick, and to
shunn'd persons,

All self-denial that stood steady and aloof on wrecks,
and saw others fill the seats of the boats,

All offering of substance or life for the good old cause, or
for a friend's sake, or opinion's sake,

All pains of enthusiasts scorn'd at by their neighbours,

All the limitless sweet love and precious suffering of
mothers,
All honest men baffled in strifes recorded or unrecorded,
All the grandeur and good of ancient nations whose
fragments we inherit,
All the good of the dozens of ancient nations unknown
to us by name, date, location, [or no,
All that was ever manfully begun, whether it succeeded
All suggestions of the divine mind of man or the divinity
of his mouth, or the shaping of his great hands,
All that is well thought or said this day on any part of
the globe, or on any of the wandering stars, or on
any of the fix'd stars, by those there as we are here,
All that is henceforth to be thought or done by you
whoever you are, or by any one,
These inure, have inured, shall inure, to the identities
from which they sprang, or shall spring..

Did you guess any thing lived only its moment ?
The world does not so exist, no parts palpable or
impalpable so exist,
No consummation exists without being from some long
previous consummation, and that from some other,
Without the farthest conceivable one coming a bit
nearer the beginning than any.

Whatever satisfies souls is true ;
Prudence entirely satisfies the craving and glut of souls,
Itself only finally satisfies the soul,
The soul has that measureless pride which revolts from
every lesson but its own.

Now I breathe the word of the prudence that walks
abreast with time, space, reality,
That answers the pride which refuses every lesson but
its own.

What is prudence is indivisible,
 Declines to separate one part of life from every part,
 Divides not the righteous from the unrighteous or the
 living from the dead,
 Matches every thought or act by its correlative,
 Knows no possible forgiveness or deputed atonement,
 Knows that the young man who composedly perill'd his
 life and lost it has done exceedingly well for himself
 without doubt,
 That he who never perill'd his life, but retains it to old
 age in riches and ease, has probably achiev'd nothing
 for himself worth mentioning,
 Knows that only that person has really learn'd who has
 learn'd to prefer results,
 Who favours body and soul the same,
 Who perceives the indirect assuredly following the direct,
 Who in his spirit in any emergency whatever neither
 hurries nor avoids death.

WARBLE FOR LILAC-TIME.

WARBLE me now for joy of lilac-time, (returning in
 reminiscence,) [of earliest summer,
 Sort me O tongue and lips for Nature's sake, souvenirs
 Gather the welcome signs, (as children with pebbles or
 stringing shells,) [the elastic air,
 Put in April and May, the hylas croaking in the ponds,
 Bees, butterflies, the sparrow with its simple notes,
 Blue-bird and darting swallow, nor forget the high-hole
 flashing his golden wings, [vapour,
 The tranquil sunny haze, the clinging smoke, the
 Shimmer of waters with fish in them, the cerulean
 above,
 All that is jocund and sparkling, the brooks running,

The maple woods, the crisp February days and the
 sugar-making,
 The robin where he hops, bright-eyed, brown-breasted,
 With musical clear call at sunrise, and again at sunset,
 Or flitting among the trees of the apple-orchard, build-
 ing the nest of his mate,
 The melted snow of March, the willow sending forth its
 yellow-green sprouts,
 For spring-time is here ! the summer is here ! and what
 is this in it and from it ? [not what ;
 Thou, soul, unloosen'd—the restlessness after I know
 Come, let us lag here no longer, let us be up and away !
 O if one could but fly like a bird !
 O to escape, to sail forth as in a ship ! [the waters ;
 To glide with thee O soul, o'er all, in all, as a ship o'er
 Gathering these hints, the preludes, the blue sky, the
 grass, the morning drops of dew,
 The lilac-scent, the bushes with dark green heart-shaped
 leaves, [innocence,
 Wood-violets, the little delicate pale blossoms called
 Samples and sorts not for themselves alone, but for their
 atmosphere,
 To grace the bush I love—to sing with the birds,
 A warble for joy of lilac-time, returning in reminiscence.

 VOICES.

1.

VOCALISM, measure, concentration, determination, and
 the divine power to speak words :
 Are you full-lung'd and limber-lipp'd from long trial ?
 from vigorous practice ? from physique ?
 Do you move in these broad lands as broad as they ?
 Come duly to the divine power to speak words !

For only at last after many years, after chastity, friendship, procreation, prudence, and nakedness,
 After treading ground and breasting river and lake,
 After a loosen'd throat, after absorbing eras, temperaments, races, after knowledge, freedom, crimes,
 After complete faith, after clarifyings, elevations, and removing obstructions,
 After these and more, it is just possible there comes to a man, a woman, the divine power to speak words ;
 Then toward that man or that woman swiftly hasten all
 —none refuse, all attend,
 Armies, ships, antiquities, libraries, paintings, machines, cities, hate, despair, amity, pain, theft, murder, aspiration, form in close ranks,
 They debouch as they are wanted to march obediently through the mouth of that man or that woman.

2.

O what is it in me that makes me tremble so at voices ?
 Surely whoever speaks to me in the right voice, him or her I shall follow,
 As the water follows the moon, silently, with fluid steps anywhere around the globe.

All waits for the right voices ; [develop'd soul ?
 Where is the practis'd and perfect organ ? where is the
 For I see every word utter'd thence has deeper, sweeter,
 new sounds, impossible on less terms.

I see brains and lips closed, tympan and temples unstruck,
 Until that comes which has the quality to strike and to unclose,
 Until that comes which has the quality to bring forth what lies slumbering forever ready in all words.

MIRACLES.

WHY, who makes much of a miracle ?
As to me I know of nothing else but miracles,
Whether I walk the streets of Manhattan,
Or dart my sight over the roofs of houses toward the
sky,
Or wade with naked feet along the beach just in the edge
of the water,
Or stand under trees in the woods,
Or talk by day with any one I love, or sleep in the bed
at night with any one I love,
Or sit at table at dinner with the rest,
Or look at strangers opposite me riding in the car,
Or watch honey-bees busy around the hive of a summer
forenoon,
Or animals feeding in the fields,
Or birds, or the wonderfulness of insects in the air,
Or the wonderfulness of the sundown, or of stars shining
so quiet and bright,
Or the exquisite delicate thin curve of the new moon in
spring ;
These with the rest, one and all, are to me miracles,
The whole referring, yet each distinct and in its place.

To me every hour of the light and dark is a miracle,
Every cubic inch of space is a miracle,
Every square yard of the surface of the earth is spread
with the same,
Every foot of the interior swarms with the same.

To me the sea is a continual miracle,
The fishes that swim—the rocks—the motion of the
waves—the ships with men in them,
What stranger miracles are there ?

SPARKLES FROM THE WHEEL.

WHERE the city's ceaseless crowd moves on the livelong
day,

Withdrawn I join a group of children watching, I pause
aside with them.

By the curb toward the edge of the flagging,
A knife-grinder works at his wheel sharpening a great
knife,

Bending over he carefully holds it to the stone, by foot
and knee,

With measur'd tread he turns rapidly, as he presses with
light but firm hand,

Forth issue then in copious golden jets,
Sparkles from the wheel.

The scene and all its belongings, how they seize and
affect me,

The sad sharp-chinn'd old man with worn clothes and
broad shoulder-band of leather,

Myself effusing and fluid, a phantom curiously floating,
now here absorb'd and arrested,

The group, (an unminded point set in a vast surrounding,)
The attentive, quiet children, the loud, proud, restive
base of the streets,

The low hoarse purr of the whirling stone, the light-
press'd blade, [of gold,

Diffusing, dropping, sideways-darting, in tiny showers
Sparkles from the wheel.

TO A PUPIL

Is reform needed ? is it through you ?

The greater the reform needed, the greater the Person-
ality you need to accomplish it.

You ! do you not see how it would serve to have eyes,
blood, complexion, clean and sweet ?

Do you not see how it would serve to have such a body
and soul that when you enter the crowd an
atmosphere of desire and command enters with you,
and every one is impress'd with your Personality ?

O the magnet ! the flesh over and over !

Go, dear friend, if need be give up all else, and com-
mence to-day to inure yourself to pluck, reality,
self-esteem, definiteness, elevatedness,

Rest not till you rivet and publish yourself of your own
Personality.

UNFOLDED OUT OF THE FOLDS.

UNFOLDED out of the folds of the woman man comes
unfolded, and is always to come unfolded,

Unfolded only out of the superbest woman of the earth
is to come the superbest man of the earth,

Unfolded out of the friendliest woman is to come the
friendliest man,

Unfolded only out of the perfect body of a woman can a
man be form'd of perfect body,

Unfolded only out of the inimitable poems of women
can come the poems of man, (only thence have my
poems come ;)

Unfolded out of the strong and arrogant woman I love,
only thence can appear the strong and arrogant
man I love,

Unfolded by brawny embraces from the well-musclcd
woman I love, only thence come the brawny embraces
of the man,

Unfolded out of the folds of the woman's brain come all
the folds of the man's brain, duly obedient,

Unfolded out of the justice of the woman all justice is
unfolded,
Unfolded out of the sympathy of the woman is all
sympathy ;
A man is a great thing upon the earth and through
eternity, but every jot of the greatness of man is
unfolded out of woman ;
First the man is shaped in the woman, he can then be
shaped in himself.

KOSMOS.

Who includes diversity and is Nature,
Who is the amplitude of the earth, and the coarseness
and sexuality of the earth, and the great charity of
the earth, and the equilibrium also,
Who has not look'd forth from the windows the eyes
for nothing, or whose brain held audience with
messengers for nothing,
Who contains believers and disbelievers, who is the most
majestic lover,
Who holds duly his or her triune proportion of realism,
spiritualism, and of the æsthetic or intellectual,
Who having consider'd the body finds all its organs and
parts good,
Who, out of the theory of the earth and of his or her
body understands by subtle analogies all other
theories,
The theory of a city, a poem, and of the large politics of
these States ;
Who believes not only in our globe with its sun and
moon, but in other globes with their suns and
moons,

Who, constructing the house of himself or herself, not
for a day but for all time, sees races, eras, dates,
generations,
The past, the future, dwelling there, like space, inseparable
together.

WHO LEARNS MY LESSON COMPLETE?

Who learns my lesson complete?
Boss, journeyman, apprentice, churchman and atheist,
The stupid and the wise thinker, parents and offspring,
merchant, clerk, porter and customer,
Editor, author, artist, and schoolboy—draw nigh and
commence;
It is no lesson—it lets down the bars to a good lesson,
And that to another, and every one to another still.

The great laws take and effuse without argument,
I am of the same style, for I am their friend,
I love them quits and quits, I do not halt and make
salaams.

I lie abstracted and hear beautiful tales of things and
the reasons of things,
They are so beautiful I nudge myself to listen.

I cannot say to any person what I hear—I cannot say it
to myself—it is very wonderful.

It is no small matter, this round and delicious globe
moving so exactly in its orbit for ever and ever,
without one jolt or the untruth of a single second,
I do not think it was made in six days, nor in ten
thousand years, nor ten billions of years,
Nor plann'd and built one thing after another as an
architect plans and builds a house.

I do not think seventy years is the time of a man or
woman,
Nor that seventy millions of years is the time of a man
or woman,
Nor that years will ever stop the existence of me, or any
one else.

Is it wonderful that I should be immortal ? as every one
is immortal ;
I know it is wonderful, but my eyesight is equally
wonderful, and how I was conceived in my mother's
womb is equally wonderful,
And pass'd from a babe in the creeping trance of a couple
of summers and winters to articulate and walk—all
this is equally wonderful.

And that my soul embraces you this hour, and we affect
each other without ever seeing each other, and never
perhaps to see each other, is every bit as wonderful.

And that I can think such thoughts as these is just as
wonderful,
And that I can remind you, and you think them and
know them to be true, is just as wonderful.

And that the moon spins round the earth and on with
the earth, is equally wonderful,
And that they balance themselves with the sun and
stars is equally wonderful.

TESTS.

ALL submit to them where they sit, inner, secure, unap-
proachable to analysis in the soul,

Not traditions, not the outer authorities are the judges,
They are the judges of outer authorities and of all
traditions,
They corroborate as they go only whatever corroborates
themselves, and touches themselves ;
For all that, they have it forever in themselves to corro-
borate far and near without one exception.

THE TORCH.

ON my Northwest coast in the midst of the night a
fishermen's group stands watching,
Out on the lake that expands before them, others are
spearing salmon,
The canoe, a dim shadowy thing, moves across the black
water,
Bearing a torch ablaze at the prow.

O STAR OF FRANCE.

1870-71.

O STAR of France,
The brightness of thy hope and strength and fame,
Like some proud ship that led the fleet so long,
Beseems to-day a wreck driven by the gale, a mastless
hulk,
And 'mid its teeming madden'd half-drown'd crowds,
Nor helm nor helmsman.

Dim smitten star,
Orb not of France alone, pale symbol of my soul, its
dearest hopes,

The struggle and the daring, rage divine for liberty,
Of aspirations toward the far ideal, enthusiast's dreams
 of brotherhood,
Of terror to the tyrant and the priest.

Star erueified—by traitors sold,
Star panting o'er a land of death, heroic land,
Strange, passionate, mocking, frivolous land.

Miserable ! yet for thy errors, vanities, sins, I will not
 now rebuke thee,
Thy unexampled woes and pangs have quell'd them all,
And left thee sacred.

In that amid thy many faults thou ever aimedst highly,
In that thou wouldst not really sell thyself however great
 the price,
In that thou surely wakedst weeping from thy drugg'd
 sleep,
In that alone among thy sisters thou, giantess, didst rend
 the ones that shamed thee,
In that thou couldst not, wouldst not, wear the usual
 chains,
This cross, thy livid face, thy pierced hands and feet,
The spear thrust in thy side.

O star ! O ship of France, beat back and baffled long !
Bear up O smitten orb ! O ship continue on !

Sure as the ship of all, the Earth itself,
Product of deathly fire and turbulent chaos,
Forth from its spasms of fury and its poisons,
Issuing at last in perfect power and beauty,
Onward beneath the sun following its course,
So thee O ship of France !

Finish'd the days, the clouds dispell'd,
The travail o'er, the long-sought extrication,
When lo ! reborn, high o'er the European world,
(In gladness answering thence, as face afar to face,
reflecting ours Columbia,)
Again thy star O France, fair lustrous star,
In heavenly peace, clearer, more bright than ever,
Shall beam immortal.

AN OLD MAN'S THOUGHT OF SCHOOL.

(For the Inauguration of a Public School, Camden, New Jersey, 1874.)

AN old man's thought of school,
An old man gathering youthful memories and blooms
that youth itself cannot.

Now only do I know you,
O fair auroral skies—O morning dew upon the grass !

And these I see, these sparkling eyes,
These stores of mystic meaning, these young lives,
Building, equipping like a fleet of ships, immortal ships,
Soon to sail out over the measureless seas,
On the soul's voyage.

Only a lot of boys and girls ?
Only the tiresome spelling, writing, cyphering classes ?
Only a public school ?

Ah more, infinitely more ;
(As George Fox rais'd his warning cry, "Is it this pile
of brick and mortar, these dead floors, windows,
rails, you call the church ?

Why this is not the church at all—the church is living,
ever living souls.”)

And you America,
Cast you the real reckoning for your present
The lights and shadows of your future, good or evil ?
To girlhood, boyhood look, the teacher and the school.

MY PICTURE-GALLERY.

In a little house keep I pictures suspended, it is not a
fix'd house, [the other ;
It is round, it is only a few inches from one side to
Yet behold, it has room for all the shows of the world,
all memories ! [death ;
Here the tableaux of life, and here the groupings of
Here do you know this ? this is cicerone himself,
With finger rais'd he points to the prodigal pictures.

WITH ALL THY GIFTS.

With all thy gifts America,
Standing secure, rapidly tending, overlooking the world,
Power, wealth, extent, vouchsafed to thee—with these
and like of these vouchsafed to thee,
What if one gift thou lackest ! (the ultimate human
problem never solving,)
The gift of perfect women fit for thee—what if that gift
of gifts thou lackest ?
The towering feminine of thee ? the beauty, health
completion, fit for thee ?
The mothers fit for thee ?

WANDERING AT MORN.

WANDERING at morn,
Emerging from the night from gloomy thoughts, thee in
my thoughts, [bird divine !
Yearning for thee harmonious Union ! thee, singing
Thee coil'd in evil times my country, with craft and
black dismay, with every meanness, treason thrust
upon thee,
This common marvel I beheld—the parent thrush I
watch'd feeding its young,
The singing thrush whose tones of joy and faith ecstatic
Fail not to certify and cheer my soul.

There ponder'd, felt I,
If worms, snakes, loathsome grubs, may to sweet
 spiritual songs be turn'd,
If vermin so transposed, so used and blessed may be,
Then may I trust in you, your fortunes, days, my
 country ;
Who knows but these may be the lessons fit for you ?
From these your future song may rise with joyous trills,
Destin'd to fill the world.

THE PRAIRIE STATES.

A NEWER garden of creation, no primal solitude,
Dense, joyous, modern, populous millions, cities and
farms,
With iron interlaced, composite, tied, many in one,
By all the world contributed—freedom's and law's and
thrift's society, [accumulations,
The crown and teeming paradise, so far, of time's
To justify the past.



PROUD MUSIC OF THE STORM.

1.

PROUD music of the storm,
Blast that careers so free, whistling across the prairies,
Strong hum of forest tree-tops—wind of the mountains,
Personified dim shapes—you hidden orchestras,
You serenades of phantoms with instruments alert,
Blending with Nature's rhythmus all the tongues of
nations ;
You chords left as by vast composers—you choruses,
You formless, free, religious dances—you from the
Orient,
You undertone of rivers, roar of pouring cataracts,
You sounds from distant guns with galloping cavalry,
Echoes of camps with all the different bugle-calls,
Trooping tumultuous, filling the midnight late, bending
me powerless,
Entering my lonesome slumber-chamber, why have you
seiz'd me ?

2.

Come forward O my soul, and let the rest retire,
Listen, lose not, it is toward thee they tend,
Parting the midnight, entering my slumber-chamber,
For thee they sing and dance O soul.

A festival song,
The duet of the bridegroom and the bride, a marriage-
march,
With lips of love, and hearts of lovers fill'd to the brim
with love,
The red-flushed cheeks and perfumes, the cortege swarm-
ing full of friendly faces young and old,
To flutes' clear notes and sounding harps' cantabile.

Now loud approaching drums,
Victoria ! see'st thou in powder-smoke the banners torn
but flying ? the rout of the baffled ?
Hearest those shouts of a conquering army ?

(Ah soul, the sobs of women, the wounded groaning in
agony,
The hiss and crackle of flames, the blacken'd ruins, the
embers of cities,
The dirge and desolation of mankind.)

Now airs antique and mediæval fill me,
I see and hear old harpers with their harps at Welsh
festivals,
I hear the minnesingers singing their lays of love,
I hear the minstrels, gleemen, troubadours, of the
middle ages.

Now the great organ sounds,
Tremulous, while underneath, (as the hid footholds of
the earth,
On which arising rest, and leaping forth depend,
All shapes of beauty, grace and strength, all hues we
know,
Green blades of grass and warbling birds, children that
gambol and play, the clouds of heaven above,)
The strong base stands, and its pulsations intermits not,

Bathing, supporting, merging all the rest, maternity of
 all the rest,
 And with it every instrument in multitudes,
 The players playing, all the world's musicians,
 The solemn hymns and masses rousing adoration,
 All passionate heart-chants, sorrowful appeals,
 The measureless sweet vocalists of ages,
 And for their solvent setting earth's own diapason,
 Of winds and woods and mighty ocean waves,
 A new composite orchestra, binder of years and climes,
 ten-fold renewer,
 As of the far-back days the poets tell, the Paradiso,
 The straying thence, the separation long, but now the
 wandering done,
 The journey done, the journeyman come home,
 And man and art with Nature fused again.

Tutti! for earth and heaven ; [wand.)
 (The Almighty leader now for once has signal'd with his
 The manly strophe of the husbands of the world,
 And all the wives responding.

The tongues of violins,
 (I think O tongues ye tell this heart, that cannot tell
 itself,
 This brooding yearning heart, that cannot tell itself.)

3.

Ah from a little child,
 Thou knowest soul how to me all sounds became music,
 My mother's voice in lullaby or hymn,
 (The voice, O tender voices, memory's loving voices,
 Lost miracle of all, O dearest mother's, sister's, voices ;)
 The rain, the growing corn, the breeze among the long-
 leav'd corn,

The measur'd sea-surf beating on the sand,
The twittering bird, the hawk's sharp scream,
The wild-fowl's notes at night as flying low migrating
north or south,

The psalm in the country church or mid the clustering
trees, the open air camp-meeting,

The fiddler in the tavern, the glee, the long-strung
sailor-song, [dawn.

The lowing cattle, bleating sheep, the crowing cock at

All songs of current lands come sounding round me,
The German airs of friendship, wine and love,
Irisn ballads, merry jigs and dances, English warbles,
Chansons of France, Scotch tunes, and o'er the rest,
Italia's peerless compositions.

Across the stage with pallor on her face, yet lurid
passion,

Stalks Norma brandishing the dagger in her hand.

I see poor crazed Lucia's eyes' unnatural gleam,
Her hair down her back falls loose and dishevell'd.

I see where Ernani walking the bridal garden,
Amid the scent of night-roses, radiant, holding his bride
by the hand,

Hears the infernal call, the death-pledge of the horn.

To crossing swords and grey hairs bared to heaven,
The clear electric base and baritone of the world,
The trombone duo, Libertad forever !

From Spanish chestnut trees' dense shade,
By old and heavy convent walls a wailing song,
Song of lost love, the torch of youth and life quench'd
in despair,

Song of the dying swan, Fernando's heart is breaking.

Awaking from her woes at last retriev'd Amina sings,
Copious as stars and glad as morning light the torrents
of her joy.

(The teeming lady comes,
The lustrous orb, Venus contralto, the blooming mother,
Sister of loftiest gods, Alboni's self I hear.)

4.

I hear those odes, symphonies, operas,
I hear in the *William Tell* the music of an arous'd and
angry people,
I hear Meyerbeer's *Huguenots*, the *Prophet*, or *Robert*,
Gounod's *Faust*, or Mozart's *Don Juan*.

I hear the dance-music of all nations,
The waltz, some delicious measure, lapsing, bathing me
in bliss,
The bolero to tinkling guitars and clattering castanets.

I see religious dances old and new,
I hear the sound of the Hebrew lyre,
I see the crusaders marching bearing the cross on high,
to the martial clang of cymbals,
I hear dervishes monotonously chanting, interspers'd
with frantic shouts, as they spin around turning
always towards Mecca,
I see the rapt religious dances of the Persians and the
Arabs,
Again, at Eleusis, home of Ceres, I see the modern
Greeks dancing, [bodies,
I hear them clapping their hands as they bend their
I hear the metrical shuffling of their feet.

I see again the wild old Corybantian dance, the per-
formers wounding each other,

I see the Roman youth to the shrill sound of flageolets
throwing and catching their weapons,
As they fall on their knees and rise again.

I hear from the Mussulman mosque the muezzin calling,
I see the worshippers within, nor form nor sermon,
argument nor word,
But silent, strange, devout, rais'd, glowing heads,
ecstatic faces.

I hear the Egyptian harp of many strings,
The primitive chants of the Nile boatmen,
The sacred imperial hymns of China,
To the delicate sounds of the king, (the stricken wood
and stone,)
Or to Hindu flutes and the fretting twang of the vina,
A band of bayaderes.

5.

Now Asia, Africa leave me, Europe seizing inflates me,
To organs huge and bands I hear as from vast con-
courses of voices,
Luther's strong hymn *Eine feste Burg ist unser Gott*,
Rossini's *Stabat Mater dolorosa*,
Or floating in some high cathedral dim with gorgeous
colour'd windows,
The passionate *Agnus Dei* or *Gloria in Excelsis*.

Composers ! mighty maestros !
And you, sweet singers of old lands, soprani, tenori,
bassi !
To you a new bard carolling in the West,
Obeisant sends his love.

(Such led to thee O soul,
All senses, shows and objects, lead to thee,
But now it seems to me sound leads o'er all the rest.)

I hear the annual singing of the children in St. Paul's
Cathedral,
Or, under the high roof of some colossal hall, the
symphonies, oratorios of Beethoven, Handel, or
Haydn,
The *Creation* in billows of godhood laves me.

Give me to hold all sounds (I madly struggling cry,)
Fill me with all the voices of the universe,
Endow me with their throbbings, Nature's also,
The tempests, waters, winds, operas and chants, marches
and dances,
Utter, pour in, for I would take them all !

6.

Then I woke softly,
And pausing, questioning awhile the music of my dream,
And questioning all those reminiscences, the tempest in
its fury,
And all the songs of sopranos and tenors,
And those rapt oriental dances of religious fervour,
And the sweet varied instruments, and the diapason of
organs,
And all the artless plaints of love and grief and death,
I said to my silent curious soul out of the bed of the
slumber-chamber,
Come, for I have found the clew I sought so long,
Let us go forth refresh'd amid the day,
Cheerfully tallying life, walking the world, the real,
Nourish'd henceforth by our celestial dream.

And I said, moreover,
Haply what thou hast heard O soul was not the sound
of winds,
Nor dream of raging storm, nor sea-hawk's flapping
wings nor harsh scream,

Nor vocalism of sun-bright Italy,
Nor German organ majestic, nor vast concourse of
 voices, nor layers of harmonies,
Nor strophes of husbands and wives, nor sound of march-
 ing soldiers,
Nor flutes, nor harps, nor the bugle-calls of camps,
But to a new rhythmns fitted for thee,
Poems bridging the way from Life to Death, vaguely
 wafted in night air, uncaught, unwritten,
Which let us go forth in the bold day and write.

PRAYER OF COLUMBUS.

A BATTER'D, wreck'd old man,
'Thrown on this savage shore, far, far from home,
Pent by the sea and dark rebellious brows, twelve
 dreary months,
Sore, stiff with many toils, sicken'd and nigh to death,
I take my way along the island's edge,
Venting a heavy heart.

I am too full of woe !
Haply I may not live another day ;
I cannot rest O God, I cannot eat or drink or sleep,
Till I put forth myself, my prayer, once more to Thee,
Breathe, bathe myself once more in Thee, commune with
 Thee,
Report myself once more to Thee.

Thou knowest my years entire, my life,
My long and crowded life of active work, not adoration
 merely ;
Thou knowest the prayers and vigils of my youth,
Thou knowest my manhood's solemn and visionary
 meditations,

Thou knowest how before I commenced I devoted all to
come to Thee,
Thou knowest I have in age ratified all those vows and
strictly kept them,
Thou knowest I have not once lost nor faith nor ecstasy
in Thee,
In shackles, prison'd, in disgrace, repining not,
Accepting all from Thee, as duly come from Thee.

All my emprises have been fill'd with Thee,
My speculations, plans, begun and carried on in thoughts
of Thee,
Sailing the deep or journeying the land for Thee ;
Intentions, purports, aspirations mine, leaving results to
Thee.

O I am sure they really came from Thee,
The urge, the ardour, the unconquerable will,
The potent, felt, interior command, stronger than
words,
A message from the Heavens whispering to me even in
sleep,
These sped me on.

By me and these the work so far accomplish'd,
By me earth's elder cloy'd and stifled lands uncloy'd,
unloos'd,
By me the hemispheres rounded and tied, the unknown
to the known.

The end I know not, it is all in Thee,
Or small or great I know not—haply what broad fields,
what lands,
Haply the brutish measureless human undergrowth I
know,

Transplanted there may rise to stature, knowledge
worthy Thee,
Haply the swords I know may there indeed be turn'd to
reaping-tools,
Haply the lifeless cross I know, Europe's dead cross,
may bud and blossom there.

One effort more, my altar this bleak sand ;
That Thou O God my life hast lighted,
With ray of light, steady, ineffable, vouchsafed of
Thee,
Light rare untellable, lighting the very light,
Beyond all signs, descriptions, languages ;
For that O God, be it my latest word, here on my
knees,
Old, poor, and paralysed, I thank Thee,

My terminus near,
The clouds already closing in upon me,
The voyage balk'd, the course disputed, lost,
I yield my ships to Thee.

My hands, my limbs grow nerveless,
My brain feels rack'd, bewilder'd,
Let the old timbers part, I will not part,
I will cling fast to Thee O God, though the waves
buffet me,
Thee, Thee at least I know.

Is it the prophet's thought I speak, or am I raving ?
What do I know of life ? what of myself ?
I know not even my own work past or present,
Dim ever-shifting guesses of it spread before me,
Of newer better worlds, their mighty parturition,
Mocking, perplexing me.

And these things I see suddenly, what mean they ?
As if some miracle, some hand divine unseal'd my eyes,
Shadowy vast shapes smile through the air and sky,
And on the distant waves sail countless ships,
And anthems in new tongues I hear saluting me.

TO THINK OF TIME.

1.

To think of time—of all that retrospection,
To think of to-day, and the ages continued henceforward.

Have you guess'd you yourself would not continue ?
Have you dreaded these earth-beetles ?
Have you fear'd the future would be nothing to you ?

Is to-day nothing ? is the beginningless past nothing ?
If the future is nothing they are just as surely nothing.

To think that the sun rose in the east—that men and
women were flexible, real, alive—that every thing
was alive,

To think that you and I did not see, feel, think, nor
bear our part,

To think that we are now here and bear our part.

2.

Not a day passes, not a minute or second without an
accouchement,

Not a day passes, not a minute or second without a
corpse.

The dull nights go over and the dull days also,
The soreness of lying so much in bed goes over,

The physician after long putting off gives the silent and
terrible look for an answer,
The children come hurried and weeping, and the brothers
and sisters are sent for,
Medicines stand unused on the shelf, (the campher-smell
has long pervaded the rooms,)
The faithful hand of the living does not desert the hand
of the dying,
The twitching lips press lightly on the forehead of the
dying,
The breath ceases and the pulse of the heart ceases,
The corpse stretches on the bed and the living look
upon it,
It is palpable as the living are palpable.

The living look upon the corpse with their eyesight,
But without eyesight lingers a different living and looks
curiously on the corpse.

8.

To think the thought of death merged in the thought of
materials,
To think of all these wonders of city and country, and
others taking great interest in them, and we taking
no interest in them.

To think how eager we are in building our houses,
To think others shall be just as eager, and we quite
indifferent.

(I see one building the house that serves him a few years,
or seventy or eighty years at most,
I see one building the house that serves him longer than
that.)

Slow-moving and black lines creep over the whole earth—
they never cease—they are the burial lines,
He that was President was buried, and he that is now
President shall surely be buried.

4.

A reminiscence of the vulgar fate,
A frequent sample of the life and death of workmen,
Each after his kind.

Cold dash of waves at the ferry-wharf, posh and ice in
the river, half-frozen mud in the streets,
A grey discouraged sky overhead, the short last daylight
of December,
A hearse and stages, the funeral of an old Broadway
stage-driver, the cortege mostly drivers.

Steady the trot to the cemetery, duly rattles the death-
bell,
The gate is pass'd, the new-dug grave is halted at, the
living alight, the hearse uncloses,
The coffin is pass'd out, lower'd and settled, the whip is
laid on the coffin, the earth is swiftly shovell'd in,
The mound above is flatted with the spades—silence,
A minute—no one moves or speaks—it is done,
He is decently put away—is there any thing more?

He was a good fellow, free-mouth'd, quick-temper'd, not
bad-looking,
Ready with life or death for a friend, fond of women,
gambled, ate hearty, drank hearty,
Had known what it was to be flush, grew low-spirited
toward the last, sicken'd, was help'd by a contri-
bution,
Died, aged forty-one years—and that was his funeral.

Thumb extended, finger uplifted, apron, cape, gloves,
strap, wet-weather clothes, whip carefully chosen,
Boss, spotter, starter, hostler, somebody loafing on you,
you loafing on somebody, headway, man before and
man behind,
Good day's work, bad day's work, pet stock, mean stock,
first out, last out, turning-in at night,
To think that these are so much and so nigh to other
drivers, and he there takes no interest in them.

5.

The markets, the government, the working-man's wages,
to think what account they are through our nights
and days,

To think that other working-men will make just as
great account of them, yet we make little or no
account.

The vulgar and the refined, what you call sin and what
you call goodness, to think how wide a difference,
To think the difference will still continue to others, yet
we lie beyond the difference.

To think how much pleasure there is,
Do you enjoy yourself in the city? or engaged in busi-
ness? or planning a nomination and election? or
with your wife and family?

Or with your mother and sisters? or in womanly house-
work? or the beautiful maternal cares?

These also flow onward to others, you and I flow onward,
But in due time you and I shall take less interest in
them.

Your farm, profits, crops—to think how engross'd you
are, [you of what avail?

To think there will still be farms, profits, crops, yet for

6.

What will be will be well, for what is is well,
To take interest is well, and not to take interest shall
be well.

The domestic joys, the daily housework or business, the
building of houses, are not phantasms, they have
weight, form, location,
Farm, profits, crops, markets, wages, government, are
none of them phantasms,
The difference between sin and goodness is no delusion,
The earth is not an echo, man and his life and all the
things of his life are well-consider'd.

You are not thrown to the winds, you gather certainly
and safely around yourself,
Yourself ! yourself ! yourself, for ever and ever !

7.

It is not to diffuse you that you were born of your
mother and father, it is to identify you,
It is not that you should be undecided, but that you
should be decided,
Something long preparing and formless is arrived and
form'd in you,
You are henceforth secure, whatever comes or goes.

The threads that were spun are gather'd, the weft
crosses the warp, the pattern is systematic.

The preparations have every one been justified,
The orchestra have sufficiently tuned their instruments,
the baton has given the signal.

The guest that was coming, he waited long, he is now
housed,

He is one of those who are beautiful and happy, he is
one of those that to look upon and be with is
enough.

The law of the past cannot be eluded,
The law of the present and future cannot be eluded,
The law of the living cannot be eluded, it is eternal,
The law of promotion and transformation cannot be
eluded,
The law of heroes and good-doers cannot be eluded,
The law of drunkards, informers, mean persons, not one
iota thereof can be eluded.

8.

Slow moving and black lines go ceaselessly over the
earth,
Northerner goes carried and Southerner goes carried, and
they on the Atlantic side and they on the Pacific,
And they between, and all through the Mississippi
country, and all over the earth.

The great masters and kosmos are well as they go, the
heroes and good-doers are well,
The known leaders and inventors and the rich owners
and pious and distinguish'd may be well,
But there is more account than that, there is strict
account of all.

The interminable hordes of the ignorant and wicked are
not nothing,
The barbarians of Africa and Asia are not nothing,
The perpetual successions of shallow people are not
nothing, as they go.

Of and in all these things,
I have dream'd that we are not to be changed so much,
nor the law of us changed,
I have dream'd that heroes and good-doers shall be under
the present and past law,
And that murderers, drunkards, liars, shall be under the
present and past law,
For I have dream'd that the law they are under now is
enough.

And I have dream'd that the purpose and essence of the
known life, the transient,
Is to form and decide indentity for the unknown life,
the permanent.

If I came but to ashes of dung,
If maggots and rats ended us, then Alarum ! for we are
betray'd,
Then indeed suspicion of death.

Do you suspect death ? if I were to suspect death I
should die now,
Do you think I could walk pleasantly and well-suited
toward annihilation ?

Pleasantly and well-suited I walk,
Whither I walk I cannot define, but I know it is good,
The whole universe indicates that it is good,
The past and the present indicate that it is good.

How beautiful and perfect are the animals !
How perfect the earth, and the minutest thing upon it !
What is called good is perfect, and what is called bad is
just as perfect.

The vegetables and minerals are all perfect, and the
imponderable fluids perfect ;
Slowly and surely they have pass'd on to this, and
slowly and surely they yet pass on.

9.

I swear I think now that every thing without exception
has an eternal soul !
The trees have, rooted in the ground ! the weeds of the
sea have ! the animals !

I swear I think there is nothing but immortality !
That the exquisite scheme is for it, and the nebulous
float is for it, and the cohering is for it !
And all preparation is for it—and indentity is for it—
and life and materials are altogether for it !





*WHISPERS OF HEAVENLY
DEATH.*

DAREST THOU NOW O SOUL.

DAREST thou now O soul,
Walk out with me toward the unknown region,
Where neither ground is for the feet nor any path to
follow ?

No map there, nor guide,
Nor voice sounding, nor touch of human hand,
Nor face with blooming flesh, nor lips, nor eyes, are in
that land.

I know it not O soul,
Nor dost thou, all is a blank before us,
All waits undream'd of in that region, that inaccessible
land.

Till when the ties loosen,
All but the ties eternal, Time and Space,
Nor darkness, gravitation, sense, nor any bounds
bounding us.

Then we burst forth, we float,
In Time and Space O soul, prepared for them,
Equal, equipt at last, (O joy ! O fruit of all !) them to
fulfil O soul.

WHISPERS OF HEAVENLY DEATH.

WHISPERS of heavenly death murmur'd I hear,
Labial gossip of night, sibilant chorals,
Footsteps gently ascending, mystical breezes wafted soft
and low,
Ripples of unseen rivers, tides of a current flowing,
forever flowing,
(Or is it the plashing of tears ? the measureless waters of
human tears ?)

I see, just see skyward, great cloud-masses,
Mournfully slowly they roll, silently swelling and
mixing,
With at times a half-dimm'd sadden'd far-off star,
Appearing and disappearing.

(Some parturition rather, some solemn immortal birth ;
On the frontiers to eyes impenetrable,
Some soul is passing over.)

YET, YET, YE DOWNCAST HOURS.

YET, yet, ye downcast hours, I know ye also,
Weights of lead, how ye clog and cling at my ankles,
Earth to a chamber of mourning turns—I hear the
o'erweening, mocking voice,
*Matter is conqueror—matter, triumphant only, continues
onward.*

Despairing cries float ceaselessly toward me,
The call of my nearest lover, putting forth, alarm'd,
 uncertain,
The sea I am quickly to sail, come tell me,
Come tell me where I am speeding, tell me my destination.

I understand your anguish, but I cannot help you,
I approach, hear, behold, the sad mouth, the look out
 of the eyes, your mute inquiry,
Whither I go from the bed I recline on, come tell me ;
Old age, alarm'd, uncertain—a young woman's voice,
 appealing to me for comfort ;
A young man's voice, *Shall I not escape ?*

AS IF A PHANTOM CARESS'D ME.

As if a phantom caress'd me,
I thought I was not alone walking here by the shore ;
But the one I thought was with me as now I walk by
 the shore, the one I loved that caress'd me,
As I lean and look through the glimmering light, that
 one has utterly disappear'd,
And those appear that are hateful to me and mock me.

ASSURANCES.

I NEED no assurances, I am a man who is preoccupied
 of his own soul ;
I do not doubt that from under the feet and beside the
 hands and face I am cognisant of, are now looking
 faces I am not cognisant of, calm and actual faces,
I do not doubt but the majesty and beauty of the world
 are latent in any iota of the world,

- I do not doubt I am limitless, and that the universes
are limitless, in vain I try to think how limitless,
I do not doubt that the orbs and the systems of orbs
play their swift sports through the air on purpose,
and that I shall one day be eligible to do as much
as they, and more than they,
I do not doubt that temporary affairs keep on and on
millions of years,
I do not doubt interiors have their interiors, and exteriors
have their exteriors, and that the eyesight has
another eyesight, and the hearing another hearing,
and the voice another voice,
I do not doubt that the passionately-wept deaths of
young men are provided for, and that the deaths of
young women and the deaths of little children are
provided for,
(Did you think Life was so well provided for, and Death,
the purport of all Life, is not well provided for ?)
I do not doubt that wrecks at sea, no matter what the
horrors of them, no matter whose wife, child,
husband, father, lover, has gone down, are provided
for, to the minutest points,
I do not doubt that whatever can possibly happen any-
where at any time, is provided for in the inherences
of things,
I do not think Life provides for all and for Time and
Space, but I believe Heavenly Death provides for
all.
-

QUICKSAND YEARS.

QUICKSAND years that whirl me I know not whither,
Your schemes, politics, fail, lines give way, substances
mock and elude me,

Only the theme I sing, the great and strong-possess'd
soul, eludes not,
One's-self must never give way—that is the final substance—that out of all is sure,
Out of politics, triumphs, battles, life, what at last
finally remains ?
When shows break up what but One's-Self is sure ?

THE LAST INVOCATION.

At the last, tenderly,
From the walls of the powerful fortress'd house,
From the clasp of the knitted locks, from the keep of
the well-closed doors,
Let me be wafted.

Let me glide noiselessly forth ;
With the key of softness unlock the locks—with a
whisper,
Set ope the doors O soul.

Tenderly—be not impatient,
(Strong is your hold O mortal flesh,
Strong is your hold O love.)

AS I WATCH'D THE PLOUGHMAN PLOUGHING.

As I watch'd the ploughman ploughing,
Or the sower sowing in the fields, or the harvester
harvesting,
I saw there too, O life and death, your analogies ;
(Life, life is the tillage, and Death is the harvest
according.)

A THOUGHT.

As I sit with others at a great feast, suddenly while the
 music is playing,
 To my mind, (whence it comes I know not,) spectral in
 mist of a wreck at sea,
 Of certain ships, how they sail from port with flying
 streamers and wafted kisses, and that is the last of
 them,
 Of the solemn and murky mystery about the fate of the
President,
 Of the flower of the marine science of fifty generations
 founder'd off the Northeast coast and going down—
 of the steamship *Arctic* going down,
 Of the veil'd tableau—women gather'd together on
 deck, pale, heroic, waiting the moment that draws
 so close—O the moment!
 A huge sob—a few bubbles—the white foam squirting
 up—and then the women gone,
 Sinking there while the passionless wet flows on—and I
 now pondering, Are those women indeed gone?
 Are souls drown'd and destroy'd so?
 Is only matter triumphant?

PENSIVE AND FALTERING.

PENSIVE and faltering,
 The words *the Dead* I write,
 For living are the Dead,
 (Haply the only living, only real,
 And I the apparition, I the spectre.)

THOU MOTHER WITH THY EQUAL BROOD.

1.

THOU Mother with thy equal brood,
 Thou varied chain of different States, yet one identity
 only,

A special song before I go I'd sing o'er all the rest,
 For thee, the future.

I'd sow a seed for thee of endless Nationality,
 I'd fashion thy ensemble including body and soul,
 I'd show away ahead thy real Union, and how it may be
 accomplish'd,

The paths to the house I seek to make,
 But leave to those to come the house itself.

Belief I sing, and preparation ;
 As Life and Nature are not great with reference to the
 present only,
 But greater still from what is yet to come,
 Out of that formula for thee I sing.

2.

As a strong bird on pinions free,
 Joyous, the amplest spaces heavenward cleaving,
 Such be the thought I'd think of thee America,
 Such be the recitative I'd bring for thee.

The conceits of the poets of other lands I'd bring thee
 not, [long,
 Nor the compliments that have served their turn so
 Nor rhyme, nor the classics, nor perfume of foreign
 court or indoor library ;
 But an odour I'd bring as from forests of pine in Maine,
 or breath of an Illinois prairie,

With open airs of Virginia or Georgia or Tennessee, or
from Texas uplands, or Florida's glades,
Or the Saguenay's black stream, or the wide blue spread
of Huron,
With presentment of Yellowstone's scenes, or Yosemite,
And murmuring under, pervading all, I'd bring the
rustling sea-sound,
That endlessly sounds from the two Great Seas of the
world.

And for thy subtler sense subtler refrains dread Mother,
Preludes of intellect tallying these and thee, mind-
formulas fitted for thee, real and sane and large as
these and thee,
Thou ! mounting higher, diving deeper than we knew,
thou transcendental Union !
By thee fact to be justified, blended with thought,
Thought of man justified, blended with God,
Through thy idea, lo, the immortal reality !
Through thy reality, lo, the immortal idea !

3.

Brain of the New World, what a task is thine,
To formulate the Modern—out of the peerless grandeur
of the modern,
Out of thyself, comprising science, to recast poems,
churches, art,
(Recast, may-be discard them, end them—may-be their
work is done, who knows ?)
By vision, hand, conception, on the background of the
mighty past, the dead,
To limn with absolute faith the mighty living present.
And yet thou living present brain, heir of the dead, the
Old-World brain,

Thou that lay folded like an unborn babe within its
folds so long,
Thou carefully prepared by it so long—haply thou but
unfoldest it, only maturest it,
It to eventuate in thee—the essence of the by-gone time
contain'd in thee,
Its poems, churches, arts, unwitting to themselves,
destined with reference to thee ;
Thou but the apples, long, long, long a-growing,
The fruit of all the Old ripening to-day in thee.

4.

Sail, sail thy best, ship of Democracy,
Of value is thy freight, 'tis not the Present only,
The Past is also stored in thee,
Thou holdest not the venture of thyself alone, not of the
Western continent alone,
Earth's *résumé* entire floats on thy keel O ship, is
steadied by thy spars,
With thee Time voyages in trust, the antecedent nations
sink or swim with thee,
With all their ancient struggles, martyrs, heroes, epics,
wars, thou bear'st the other continents,
Theirs, theirs as much as thine, the destination-port
triumphant ;
Steer then with good strong hand and wary eye O
helmsman, thou carriest great companions,
Venerable priestly Asia sails this day with thee,
And royal feudal Europe sails this day with thee.

5.

Beautiful world of new superber birth that rises to my
eyes,
Like a limitless golden cloud filling the western sky,

Emblem of general maternity lifted above all,
Sacred shape of the bearer of daughters and sons,
Out of thy teeming womb thy giant babes in ceaseless
 procession issuing,
Acceding from such gestation, taking and giving con-
 tinual strength and life,
World of the real—world of the twain in one,
World of the soul, born by the world of the real alone,
 led to identity, body, by it alone,
Yet in beginning only, incalculable masses of composite
 precious materials,
By history's cycles forwarded, by every nation, language,
 hither sent,
Ready, collected here, a freer, vast, electric world, to be
 constructed here,
(The true New World, the world of orbic science, morals,
 literatures to come,)
Thou wonder world yet undefined, unform'd, neither do
 I define thee,
How can I pierce the impenetrable blank of the future ?
I feel thy ominous greatness evil as well as good,
I watch thee advancing, absorbing the present, tran-
 scending the past,
I see thy light lighting, and thy shadow shadowing, as
 if the entire globe,
But I do not undertake to define thee, hardly to com-
 prehend thee,
I but thee name, thee prophesy, as now,
I merely thee ejaculate !

Thee in thy future,
Thee in thy only permanent life, career, thy own un-
 loosen'd mind, thy soaring spirit,
Thee as another equally needed sun, radiant, ablaze,
 swift-moving, fructifying all,

Thee risen in potent cheerfulness and joy, in endless
great hilarity,
Scattering for good the cloud that hung so long, that
weigh'd so long upon the mind of man,
The doubt, suspicion, dread, of gradual, certain deca-
dence of man ;
Thee in thy larger, saner brood of female, male—theo in
thy athletes, moral, spiritual, South, North, West,
East,
(To thy immortal breasts, Mother of All, thy every
daughter, son, endear'd alike, forever equal,)
Thee in thy own musicians, singers, artists, unborn yet,
but certain,
Thee in thy moral wealth and civilisation, (until which
thy proudest material civilisation must remain in
vain,)
Thee in thy all-supplying, all enclosing worship—theo
in no single bible, saviour, merely,
Thy saviours countless, latent within thyself, thy bibles
incessant within thyself, equal to any, divine as any,
(Thy soaring course thee formulating, not in thy two
great wars, nor in thy century's visible growth,
But far more in these leaves and chants, thy chants,
great Mother !)

[students, born of thee,
Thee in an education grown of thee, in teachers, studies,
Thee in thy democratic fêtes en-masse, thy high original
festivals, operas, lecturers, preachers,
Thee in thy ultimata, (the preparations only now com-
pleted, the edifice on sure foundations tied,)
Thee in thy pinnacles, intellect, thought, thy topmost
rational joys, thy love and godlike aspiration,
In thy resplendent coming literati, thy full-lung'd
orators, thy sacerdotal bards, kosmic savans,
These ! these in thee, (certain to come,) to-day I
prophesy.

6.

Land tolerating all, accepting all, not for the good alone,
all good for thee,
Land in the realms of God to be a realm unto thyself,
Under the rule of God to be a rule unto thyself.

(Lo, where arise three peerless stars,
To be thy natal stars my country, Ensemble, Evolution,
Freedom,
Set in the sky of Law.)

Land of unprecedented faith, God's faith,
Thy soil, thy very subsoil, all upheav'd,
The general inner earth so long so sedulously draped
over, now hence for what it is boldly laid bare,
Open'd by thee to heaven's light for benefit or bale.

Not for success alone,
Not to fair-sail unintermitted always,
The storm shall dash thy face, the murk of war and
worse than war shall cover thee all over,
(Wert capable of war, its tug and trials? be capable of
peace, its trials,
For the tug and mortal strain of nations come at last in
prosperous peace, not war ;)
In many a smiling mask death shall approach beguiling
thee, thou in disease shalt swelter,
The livid cancer spread its hideous claws, clinging upon
thy breasts, seeking to strike thee deep within,
Consumption of the worst, moral consumption, shall
rouge thy face with hectic,
But thou shalt face thy fortunes, thy diseases, and
surmount them all,
Whatever they are to-day and whatever through time
they may be,

They each and all shall lift and pass away and cease
from thee,
While thou, Time's spirals rounding, out of thyself,
thyself still extricating, fusing,
Equable, natural, mystical Union thou, (the mortal with
immortal blent,)
Shalt soar toward the fulfilment of the future, the spirit
of the body and the mind,
The soul, its destinies.

The soul, its destinies, the real real,
(Purport of all these apparitions of the real ;)
In thee America, the soul, its destinies,
Thou globe of globes ! thou wonder nebulous !
By many a throe of heat and cold convuls'd, (by these
thyself solidifying,)
Thou mental, moral orb—thou New, indeed new,
Spiritual World !
The Present holds thee not—for such vast growth as
thine,
For such unparallel'd flight as thine, such brood as thine.
The FUTURE only holds thee and can hold thee.





FROM NOON TO STARRY NIGHT.

THOU ORB ALOFT FULL-DAZZLING.

THOU orb aloft full-dazzling ! thou hot October noon !
Flooding with sheeny light the grey beach sand,
The sibilant near sea with vistas far and foam,
And tawny streaks and shades and spreading blue ;
O sun of noon refulgent ! my special word to thee.

Hear me illustrious !
Thy lover me, for always I have loved thee,
Even as basking babe, then happy boy alone by some
wood edge, thy touching-distant beams enough,
Or man matured, or young or old, as now to thee I
launch my invocation.

(Thou canst not with thy dumbness me deceive,
I know before the fitting man all Nature yields,
Though answering not in words, the skies, trees, hear
his voice—and thou O sun,
As for thy throes, thy perturbations, sudden breaks and
shafts of flame gigantic,
I understand them, I know those flames, those pertur-
bations well.)

Thou that with fructifying heat and light,
O'er myriad farms, o'er lands and waters North and
South,
O'er Mississippi's endless course, o'er Texas' grassy
plains, Kanada's woods,
O'er all the globe that turns its face to thee shining in
space, [seas,
Thou that impartially infoldest all, not only continents,
Thou that to grapes and weeds and little wild flowers
givest so liberally,
Shed, shed thyself on mine and me, with but a fleeting
ray out of thy million millions,
Strike through these chants.

Nor only launch thy subtle dazzle and thy strength for
these,
Prepare the later afternoon of me myself—prepare my
lengthening shadows,
Prepare my starry nights.

O MAGNET-SOUTH.

O MAGNET-SOUTH ! O glistening perfumed South ! my
South !
O quick mettle, rich blood, impulse and love ! good and
evil ! O all dear to me !
O dear to me my birth-things—all moving things and
the trees where I was born—the grains, plants,
rivers,
Dear to me my own slow sluggish rivers where they
flow, distant, over flats of silvery sands or through
swamps,
Dear to me the Roanoke, the Savannah, the Altamahaw,
the Pedee, the Tombigbee, the Santee, the Coosa
and the Sabine,

O pensive, far away wandering, I return with my soul to
haunt their banks again,
Again in Florida I float on transparent lakes, I float on
the Okeechobee, I cross the hummock-land or
through pleasant openings or dense forests,
I see the parrots in the woods, I see the papaw-tree and
the blossoming titi ;
Again, sailing in my coaster on deck, I coast off Georgia,
I coast up the Carolinas,
I see where the live-oak is growing, I see where the
yellow-pine, the scented bay-tree, the lemon and
orange, the cypress, the graceful palmetto,
I pass rude sea-headlands and enter Pamlico sound
through an inlet, and dart my vision inland ;
O the cotton plant ! the growing fields of rice, sugar,
hemp ! [large white flowers,
The cactus guarded with thorns, the laurel-tree with
The range afar, the richness and barrenness, the old
woods charged with mistletoe and trailing moss,
The piney odour and the gloom, the awful natural
stillness, (here in these dense swamps the freebooter
carries his gun, and the fugitive has his conceal'd
hut ;))
O the strange fascination of these half-known half-
impassable swamps, infested by reptiles, resounding
with the bellow of the alligator, the sad noises of
the night-owl and the wild-cat, and the whirr of the
rattlesnake,
The mocking-bird, the American mimic, singing all the
forenoon, singing through the moonlit night,
The humming-bird, the wild turkey, the raccoon, the
opossum ;
A Kentucky corn-field, the tall, graceful, long-leav'd
corn, slender, flapping, bright green, with tassels,
with beautiful ears each well-sheath'd in its husk ;

O my heart ! O tender and fierce pangs, I can stand
them not, I will depart ;
O to be a Virginian where I grew up ! O to be a
Carolinian !
O longings irrepressible ! O I will go back to old
Tennessee and never wander more.

MANNAHATTA.

I WAS asking for something specific and perfect for my
city,
Whereupon lo ! upsprang the aboriginal name.

Now I see what there is in a name, a word, liquid, sane,
unruly, musical, self-sufficient,
I see that the word of my city is that word from of old,
Because I see that word nested in nests of water-bays,
superb,
Rich, hemm'd thick all around with sailships and steam-
ships, an island sixteen miles long, solid-founded,
Numberless crowded streets, high growths of iron,
slender, strong, light, splendidly uprising toward
clear skies, [down,
Tides swift and ample, well-loved by me, toward sun-
The flowing sea-currents, the little islands, larger
adjoining islands, the heights, the villas,
The countless masts, the white shore-steamers, the
lighters, the ferry-boats, the black sea-steamers
well-modell'd,
The down-town streets, the jobbers' houses of business,
the houses of business of the ship-merchants and
money-brokers, the river-streets,
Immigrants arriving, fifteen or twenty thousand in a
week,

The carts hauling goods, the manly race of drivers of
 horses, the brown-faced sailors,
 The summer-air, the bright sun shining, and the sailing
 clouds aloft,
 The winter snows, the sleigh-bells, the broken ice in the
 river, passing along up or down with the flood-tide
 or ebb-tide,
 The mechanics of the city, the masters, well-form'd,
 beautiful-faced, looking you straight in the eyes,
 Trottoirs throng'd, vehicles, Broadway, the women, the
 shops and shows,
 A million people—manners free and superb—open
 voices—hospitality—the most courageous and
 friendly young men, [masts !
 City of hurried and sparkling waters ! city of spires and
 City nested in bays ! my city !

A RIDDLE SONG.

THAT which eludes this verse and any verse,
 Unheard by sharpest ear, unform'd in clearest eye or
 cunningest mind,
 Nor lore nor fame, nor happiness nor wealth,
 And yet the pulse of every heart and life throughout the
 world incessantly,
 Which you and I and all pursuing ever ever miss,
 Open but still a secret, the real of the real, an illusion,
 Costless, vouchsafed to each, yet never man the owner,
 Which poets vainly seek to put in rhyme, historians in
 prose,
 Which sculptor never chisell'd yet, nor painter painted,
 Which vocalist never sung, nor orator nor actor ever
 utter'd,
 Invoking here and now I challenge for my song.

Indifferently, 'mid public, private haunts, in solitude,
Behind the mountain and the wood,
Companion of the city's busiest streets, through the
 assemblage,
It and its radiations constantly glide.

In looks of fair unconscious babes,
Or strangely in the coffin'd dead,
Or show of breaking dawn or stars by night,
As some dissolving delicate film of dreams,
Hiding yet lingering.

Two little breaths of words comprising it,
Two words, yet all from first to last comprised in it.

How ardently for it !
How many ships have sail'd and sunk for it !
How many travellers started from their homes and ne'er
 return'd !
How much of genius boldly staked and lost for it !
What countless stores of beauty, love, ventur'd for it !
How all superbest deeds since Time began are traceable
 to it—and shall be to the end !
How all heroic martyrdoms to it !
How, justified by it, the horrors, evils, battles of the
 earth !
How the bright fascinating lambent flames of it, in every
 age and land, have drawn men's eyes,
Rich as a sunset on the Norway coast, the sky, the
 islands, and the cliffs,
Or midnight's silent glowing northern lights unreachable.

Haply God's riddle it, so vague and yet so certain,
The soul for it, and all the visible universe for it,
And heaven at last for it.

EXCELSIOR.

Who has gone farthest ? for I would go farther,
And who has been just ? for I would be the most just
person of the earth,
And who most cautious ? for I would be more cautious,
And who has been happiest ? O I think it is I—I think
no one was ever happier than I, [best I have,
And who has lavish'd all ? for I lavish constantly the
And who proudest ? for I think I have reason to be the
proudest son alive—for I am the son of the brawny
and tall-topt city,
And who has been bold and true ? for I would be the
boldest and truest being of the universe,
And who beuevolent ? for I would show more benevo-
lence than all the rest,
And who has receiv'd the love of the most friends ? for
I know what it is to receive the passionate love of
many friends,
And who possesses a perfect and enamour'd body ? for
I do not believe any one possesses a more perfect or
enamour'd body than mine,
And who thinks the amplest thoughts ? for I would
surround those thoughts,
And who has made hymns fit for the earth ? for I am mad
with devouring ecstasy to make joyous hymns for
the whole earth.

OLD WAR-DREAMS.

In midnight sleep of many a face of anguish,
Of the look at first of the mortally wounded, (of that
indescribable look,)
Of the dead on their backs with arms extended wide,
I dream, I dream, I dream.

Of scenes of Nature, fields and mountains,
Of skies so beauteous after a storm, and at night the
 moon so unearthly bright,
Shining sweetly, shining down, where we dig the
 trenches and gather the heaps,
 I dream, I dream, I dream.

Long have they pass'd, faces and trenches and fields,
Where through the carnage I moved with a callous
 composure, or away from the fallen,
Onward I sped at the time—but now of their forms at
 night,
 I dream, I dream, I dream.

WHAT BEST I SEE IN THEE.

To U. S. Grant, return'd from his World's Tour.

WHAT best I see in thee,
Is not that where thou mov'st down history's great
 highways,
Ever undimm'd by time shoots warlike victory's dazzle,
Or that thou sat'st where Washington sat, ruling the
 land in peace,
Or thou the man whom feudal Europe feted, venerable
 Asia swarm'd upon, [promenade ;
Who walk'd with kings with even pace the round world's
But that in foreign lands, in all thy walks with kings,
Those prairie sovereigns of the West, Kansas, Missouri,
 Illinois,
Ohio's, Indiana's millions, comrades, farmers, soldiers, all
 to the front,
Invisibly with thee walking with kings with even pace
 the round world's promenade,
Were all so justified.

THICK-SPRINKLED BUNTING.

THICK-SPRINKLED bunting ! flag of stars !
Long yet your road, fateful flag—long yet your road, and
lined with bloody death,
For the prize I see at issue at last is the world,
All its ships and shores I see interwoven with your
threads greedy banner ;
Dream'd again the flags of kings, highest borne, to
flaunt unrivall'd ?
O hasten flag of man—O with sure and steady step,
passing highest flags of kings,
Walk supreme to the heavens mighty symbol—run up
above them all,
Flag of stars ! thick-sprinkled bunting !

AS I WALK THESE BROAD MAJESTIC DAYS.

As I walk these broad majestic days of peace,
(For the war, the struggle of blood finish'd, wherein, O
terrific Ideal,
Against vast odds erewhile having gloriously won,
Now thou stridest on, yet perhaps in time toward denser
wars, [dangers,
Perhaps to engage in time in still more dreadful contests,
Longer campaigns and crises, labours beyond all others,)
Around me I hear that eclat of the world, politics,
produce,
The announcements of recognised things, science,
The approved growth of cities and the spread of inven-
tions.

I see the ships, (they will last a few years,)
The vast factories with their foremen and workmen,
And hear the indorsement of all, and do not object to it.

But I too announce solid things,
Science, ships, politics, cities, factories, are not nothing,
Like a grand procession to music of distant bugles
pouring, triumphantly moving, and grander heaving
in sight,
They stand for realities—all is as it should be.

Then my realities ;
What else is so real as mine ?
Libertad and the divine average, freedom to every slave
on the face of the earth,
The rapt promises and luminè of seers, the spiritual
world, these centuries-lasting songs,
And our visions, the visions of poets, the most solid
announcements of any.

A CLEAR MIDNIGHT.

THIS is thy hour O Soul, thy free flight into the
worldless,
Away from books, away from art, the day erased, the
lesson done,
Thee fully forth emerging, silent, gazing, pondering the
themes thou lovest best,
Night, sleep, death and the stars.





SONGS OF PARTING.

AS THE TIME DRAWS NIGH.

As the time draws nigh glooming a cloud,
A dread beyond of I know not what darkens me.

I shall go forth,
I shall traverse the States awhile, but I cannot tell
whither or how long,
Perhaps soon some day or night while I am singing my
voice will suddenly cease.

O book, O chants ! must all then amount to but this ?
Must we barely arrive at this beginning of us ?—and yet
it is enough, O soul ;
O soul, we have positively appear'd—that is enough.

YEARS OF THE MODERN.

YEARS of the modern ! years of the unperform'd !
Your horizon rises, I see it parting away for more august
dramas,
I see not America only, not only Liberty's nation but
other nations preparing,

I see tremendous entrances and exits, new combinations,
the solidarity of races,
I see that force advancing with irresistible power on the
world's stage,
(Have the old forces, the old wars, played their parts?
are the acts suitable to them closed ?)
I see Freedom, completely arm'd and victorious, and very
haughty, with Law on one side and Peace on the
other,
A stupendous trio all issuing forth against the idea of
caste ;
What historic denouements are these we so rapidly
approach ?
I see men marching and countermarching by swift
millions, [broken,
I see the frontiers and boundaries of the old aristocracies
I see the landmarks of European kings removed,
I see this day the People beginning their landmarks, (all
others give way ;)
Never were such sharp questions ask'd as this day,
Never was average man, his soul, more energetic, more
like a God,
Lo, how he urges and urges, leaving the masses no rest !
His daring foot is on land and sea everywhere, he
colonises the Pacific, the archipelagoes,
With the steamship, the electric telegraph, the news-
paper, the wholesale engines of war,
With these and the world-spreading factories he inter-
links all geography, all lands ;
What whispers are these O lands, running ahead of you,
passing under the seas ?
Are all nations communing ? is there going to be but one
heart to the globe ?
Is humanity forming en-masse ? for lo, tyrants tremble,
crowns grow dim,

The earth, restive, confronts a new era, perhaps a general
divine war,
No one knows what will happen next, such portents fill
the days and nights ;
Years prophetic! the space ahead as I walk, as I
vainly try to pierce it, is full of phantoms,
Unborn deeds, things soon to be, project their shapes
around me, [of dreams O years !
This incredible rush and heat, this strange ecstatic fever
Your dreams O years, how they penetrate through me !
(I know not whether I sleep or wake ;)
The perform'd America and Europe grow dim, retiring
in shadow behind me,
The unperform'd, more gigantic than ever, advance,
advance upon me.

ASHES OF SOLDIERS.

ASHES of soldiers South or North,
As I muse retrospective murmuring a chant in thought,
The war resumes, again to my sense your shapes,
And again the advance of the armies.

Noiseless as mists and vapours,
From their graves in the trenches ascending,
From cemeteries all through Virginia and Tennessee,
From every point of the compass out of the countless
graves,
In wafted clouds, in myriads large, or squads of twos or
threes or single ones they come,
And silently gather round me.

Now sound no note O trumpeters,
Not at the head of my cavalry parading on spirited
horses,

With sabres drawn and glistening, and carbines by
their thighs, (ah my brave horsemen !
My handsome tan-faced horsemen ! what life, what joy
and pride,
With all the perils were yours.)

Nor you drummers, neither at reveillé at dawn,
Nor the long roll alarming the camp, nor even the
muffled beat for a burial,
Nothing from you this time O drummers bearing my
warlike drums.

But aside from these and the marts of wealth and the
crowded promenade,
Admitting around me comrades close unseen by the rest
and voiceless, [alive,
The slain elate and alive again, the dust and debris
I chant this chant of my silent soul in the name of all
dead soldiers.

Faces so pale with wondrous eyes, very dear, gather
closer yet,
Draw close, but speak not.

Phantoms of countless lost,
Invisible to the rest henceforth become my companions,
Follow me ever—desert me not while I live.

Sweet are the blooming cheeks of the living—sweet are
the musical voices sounding,
But sweet, ah sweet, are the dead with their silent eyes.

Dearest comrades, all is over and long gone,
But love is not over—and what love, O comrades !
Perfume from battle-fields rising, up from the foeter
arising.

Perfume therefore my chant, O love, immortal love,
 Give me to bathe the memories of all dead soldiers,
 Shroud them, embalm them, cover them all over with
 tender pride.

Perfume all—make all wholesome,
 Make these ashes to nourish and blossom,
 O love, solve all, fructify all with the last chemistry. •

Give me exhaustless, make me a fountain,
 That I exhale love from me wherever I go like a moist
 perennial dew,
 For the ashes of all dead soldiers South or North.

THOUGHTS.

1.

Of these years I sing,
 How they pass and have pass'd through convuls'd pains,
 as through parturitions,
 How America illustrates birth, muscular youth, the
 promise, the sure fulfilment, the absolute success,
 despite of people—illustrates evil as well as good,
 The vehement struggle so fierce for unity in one's-self;
 How many hold despairingly yet to the models departed,
 caste, myths, obedience, compulsion, and to infidelity,
 How few see the arrived models, the athletes, the
 Western States, or see freedom or spirituality, or
 hold any faith in results,
 (But I see the athletes, and I see the results of the war
 glorious and inevitable, and they again leading to
 other results.)

How the great cities appear—how the Democratic
masses, turbulent, wilful, as I love them,
How the whirl, the contest, the wrestle of evil with
good, the sounding and resounding, keep on and on,
How society waits unform'd, and is for a while between
things ended and things begun,
How America is the continent of glories, and of the
triumph of freedom and of the Democracies, and of
the fruits of society, and of all that is begun,
And how the States are complete in themselves,—and
how all triumphs and glories are complete in them-
selves, to lead onward,
And how these of mine and of the States will in their
turn be convuls'd, and serve other parturitions and
transitions,
And how all people, sights, combinations, the demo-
cratic masses too, serve—and how every fact, and
war itself, with all its horrors, serves,
And how now or at any time each serves the exquisite
transition of death.

2.

Of seeds dropping into the ground, of births,
Of the steady concentration of America, inland, upward,
to impregnable and swarming places,
Of what Indiana, Kentucky, Arkansas, and the rest
are to be,
Of what a few years will show there in Nebraska,
Colorado, Nevada, and the rest,
(Or, afar, mounting the Northern Pacific to Sitka or
Aliaska,)
Of what the feuillage of America is the preparation for—
and of what all sights, North, South, East and
West, are.

Of this Union welded in blood, of the solemn price paid,
 of the unnamed lost ever present in my mind ;
Of the temporary use of materials for identity's sake,
Of the present, passing, departing—of the growth of
 completer men than any yet,
Of all sloping down there where the fresh free giver the
 mother, the Mississippi flows,
Of mighty inland cities yet unsurvey'd and unsuspected,
Of the new and good names, of the modern develop-
 ments, of inalienable homesteads,
Of a free and original life there, of simple diet and clean
 and sweet blood,
Of liveness, majestic faces, clear eyes, and perfect
 physique there,
Of immense spiritual results future years far West, each
 side of the Anahuacs,
Of these songs, well understood there, (being made for
 that area,)
Of the native scorn of grossness and gain there,
(O it lurks in me night and day—what is gain after all
 to savageness and freedom ?)

SONG AT SUNSET.

SPLENDOUR of ended day floating and filling me,
Hour prophetic, hour resuming the past,
Inflating my throat, you divine average,
You earth and life till the last ray gleams I sing.

Open mouth of my soul uttering gladness,
Eyes of my soul seeing perfection,
Natural life of me faithfully praising things,
Corroborating forever the triumph of things.

Illustrious every one ! [spirits,
Illustrious what we name space, sphere of unnumber'd
Illustrious the mystery of motion in all beings, even
the tiniest insect,
Illustrious the attribute of speech, the senses, the body,
Illustrious the passing light—illustrious the pale reflection
on the new moon in the western sky,
Illustrious whatever I see or hear or touch, to the last.

Good in all,
In the satisfaction and aplomb of animals,
In the annual return of the seasons,
In the hilarity of youth,
In the strength and flush of manhood,
In the grandeur and exquisiteness of old age,
In the superb vistas of death.

Wonderful to depart !
Wonderful to be here !
The heart, to jet the all-alike and innocent blood !
To breathe the air, how delicious !
To speak—to walk—to seize something by the hand !
To prepare for sleep, for bed, to look on my rose-colour'd
flesh !
To be conscious of my body, so satisfied, so large !
To be this incredible God I am !
To have gone forth among other Gods, these men and
women I love.

Wonderful how I celebrate you and myself !
How my thoughts play subtly at the spectacles around !
How the clouds pass silently overhead !
How the earth darts on and on ! and how the sun, moon,
stars, dart on and on !
How the water sports and sings ! (surely it is alive !)

How the trees rise and stand up, with strong trunks,
with branches and leaves?
(Surely there is something more in each of the trees,
some living soul.)

O amazement of things—even the least particle !
O spirituality of things !
O strain musical flowing through ages and continents,
now reaching me and America !
I take your strong chords, intersperse them, and cheer-
fully pass them forward.

I too carol the sun, usher'd or at noon, or as now, setting,
I too throb to the brain and beauty of the earth and of
all the growths of the earth,
I too have felt the resistless call of myself.

As I steam'd down the Mississippi,
As I wander'd over the prairies, [my eyes,
As I have lived, as I have look'd through my windows
As I went forth in the morning, as I beheld the light
breaking in the east,
As I bathed on the beach of the Eastern Sea, and again
on the beach of the Western Sea,
As I roam'd the streets of inland Chicago, whatever
streets I have roam'd,
Or cities or silent woods, or even amid the sights of war,
Wherever I have been I have charged myself with
contentment and triumph.

I sing to the last the equalities modern or old,
I sing the endless finales of things,
I say Nature continues, glory continues.
I praise with electric voice,
For I do not see one imperfection in the universe,

And I do not see one cause or result lamentable at last
in the universe.

O setting sun ! though the time has come,
I still warble under you, if none else does, unmitigated
adoration.

AS AT THY PORTALS ALSO DEATH.

As at thy portals also death,
Entering thy sovereign, dim, illimitable grounds,
To memories of my mother, to the divine blending,
maternity,
To her, buried and gone, yet buried not, gone not from
me,
(I see again the calm benignant face fresh and beautiful
still,
I sit by the form in the coffin,
I kiss and kiss convulsively again the sweet old lips, the
cheeks, the closed eyes in the coffin ;)
To her, the ideal woman, practical, spiritual, of all of
earth, life, love, to me the best,
I grave a monumental line, before I go, amid these songs,
And set a tombstone here.

MY LEGACY.

THE business man, the acquirer vast,
After assiduous years surveying results, preparing for
departure,
Devises houses and lands to his children, bequeaths
stocks, goods, funds for a school or hospital,
Leaves money to certain companions to buy tokens,
souvenirs of gems and gold.

But I, my life surveying, closing,
With nothing to show to devise from its idle years,
Nor houses nor lands, nor tokens of gems or gold for my
friends,
Yet certain remembrances of the war for you, and after
you,
And little souvenirs of camps and soldiers, with my love,
I bind together and bequeath in this bundle of songs.

PENSIVE ON HER DEAD GAZING.

PENSIVE on her dead gazing I heard the Mother of All,
Desperate on the torn bodies, on the forms covering the
battle-fields gazing,
(As the last gun ceased, but the scent of the powder-
smoke linger'd,)
As she call'd to her earth with mournful voice while she
stalk'd,
Absorb them well O my earth, she cried, I charge you
lose not my sons, lose not an atom,
And you streams absorb them well, taking their dear
blood,
And you local spots, and you airs that swim above
lightly impalpable,
And all you essences of soil and growth, and you my
rivers' depths,
And you mountain sides, and the woods where my dear
children's blood trickling redden'd,
And you trees down in your roots to bequeath to all
future trees,
My dead absorb or South or North—my young men's
bodies absorb, and their precious precious blood,
Which holding in trust for me faithfully back again give
me many a year hence,

In unseen essence and odour of surface and grass,
centuries hence,
In blowing airs from the fields back again give me my
darlings, give my immortal heroes,
Exhale me them centuries hence, breathe me their breath,
let not an atom be lost,
O years and graves ! O air and soil ! O my dead, an
aroma sweet !
Exhale them perennial sweet death, years, centuries
hence.

CAMPS OF GREEN.

Nor alone those camps of white, old comrades of the
wars,
When as order'd forward, after a long march,
Footsore and weary, soon as the light lessens we halt
for the night,
Some of us so fatigued carrying the gun and knapsack,
dropping asleep in our tracks,
Others pitching the little tents, and the fires lit up
begin to sparkle,
Outposts of pickets posted surrounding alert through
the dark,
And a word provided for countersign, careful for safety,
Till to the call of the drummers at daybreak loudly
beating the drums,
We rise up refresh'd, the night and sleep pass'd over,
and resume our journey,
Or proceed to battle.

Lo, the camps of the tents of green,
Which the days of peace keep filling, and the days of
war keep filling,

With a mystic army, (is it too order'd forward ? is it too
only halting awhile,
Till night and sleep pass over ?)

Now in those camps of green, in their tents dotting the
world,
In the parents, children, husbands, wives, in them, in
the old and young,
Sleeping under the sunlight, sleeping under the moon-
light, content and silent there at last,
Behold the mighty bivouac-field and waiting-camp of all,
Of the corps and generals all, and the President over
the corps and generals all,
And of each of us O soldiers, and of each and all in the
ranks we fought,
(There without hatred we all, all meet.)

For presently O soldiers, we too camp in our place in
the bivouac-camps of green,
But we need not provide for outposts, nor word for the
countersign,
Nor drummer to beat the morning drum.

THE SOBBING OF THE BELLS.

(*Midnight, Sept. 19-20, 1881.*)

THE sobbing of the bells, the sudden death-news every-
where,
The slumberers rouse, the rapport of the People,
(Full well they know that message in the darkness,
Full well return, respond within their breasts, their
brains, the sad reverberations,)
The passionate toll and clang—city to city, joining,
sounding, passing,
Those heart-beats of a Nation in the night.

AS THEY DRAW TO A CLOSE.

As they draw to a close, [them,
 Of what underlies the precedent songs—of my aims in
 Of the seed I have sought to plant in them,
 Of joy, sweet joy, through many a year, in them,
 (For them, for them have I lived, in them my work is
 done,)
 Of many an aspiration fond, of many a dream and plan ;
 Through Space and Time fused in a chant, and the
 flowing eternal identity,
 To Nature encompassing these, encompassing God—to
 the joyous, electric all,
 To the sense of Death, and accepting exulting in Death
 in its turn the same as life,
 The entrance of man to sing ;
 To compact you, ye parted, diverse lives,
 To put rapport the mountains and rocks and streams,
 And the winds of the north, and the forests of oak and
 pine,
 With you O soul.

JOY, SHIPMATE, JOY !

Joy, shipmate, joy !
 (Pleas'd to my soul at death I cry,)
 Our life is closed, our life begins,
 The long, long anchorage we leave,
 The ship is clear at last, she leaps !
 She swiftly courses from the shore,
 Joy, shipmate, joy.

THE UNTOLD WANT.

THE untold want by life and land ne'er granted,
 Now voyager sail thou forth to seek and find.

NOW FINALE TO THE SHORE.

Now finale to the shore,
 Now, land and life finale and farewell,
 Now Voyager depart, (much, much for thee is yet in
 store,)

Often enough hast thou adventur'd o'er the seas,
 Cautiously cruising, studying the charts,
 Duly again to port and hawser's tie returning ;
 But now obey thy cherish'd secret wish,
 Embrace thy friends, leave all in order,
 To port and hawser's tie no more returning,
 Depart upon thy endless cruise old Sailor.

 SO LONG !

To conclude, I announce what comes after me.

I remember I said before my leaves sprang at all,
 I would raise my voice jocund and strong with reference
 to consummations.

When America does what was promis'd,
 When through these States walk a hundred millions of
 superb persons, [bute to them,
 When the rest part away for superb persons and contri-
 When breeds of the most perfect mothers denote America,
 Then to me and mine our due fruition.

I have pressed through in my own right,
 I have sung the body and the soul, war and peace have
 I sung, and the songs of life and death,
 And the songs of birth, and shown that there are many
 births.

I have offer'd my style to every one, I have journey'd
with confident step ;
While my pleasure is yet at the full I whisper *So long !*
And take the young woman's hand and the young man's
hand for the last time.

I announce natural persons to arise,
I announce justice triumphant,
I announce uncompromising liberty and equality,
I announce the justification of candour and the justification of pride.

I announce that the identity of these States is a single
identity only,
I announce the Union more and more compact, indissoluble,
I announce splendours and majesties to make all the
previous politics of the earth insignificant.

I announce adhesiveness, I say it shall be limitless,
unloosen'd,
I say you shall yet find the friend you were looking for.

I announce a man or woman coming, perhaps you are
the one, (*So long !*)
I announce the great individual, fluid as Nature, chaste,
affectionate, compassionate, fully arm'd.

I announce a life that shall be copious, vehement,
spiritual, bold,
I announce an end that shall lightly and joyfully meet
its translation.

I announce myriads of youths, beautiful, gigantic, sweet-blooded,
I announce a race of splendid and savage old men.

O thicker and faster—(*So long* !)
O crowding too close upon me,
I foresee too much, it means more than I thought,
It appears to me I am dying.

Hasten throat and sound your last,
Salute me—salute the days once more. Peal the old cry
once more.

Screaming electric, the atmosphere using,
At random glancing, each as I notice absorbing,
Swiftly on, but a little while alighting,
Curious envelop'd messages delivering,
Sparkles hot, seed ethereal down in the dirt dropping,
Myself unknowing, my commission obeying, to question
it never daring,
To ages and ages yet the growth of the seed leaving,
To troops out of the war arising, they the tasks I have
set promulging,
To women certain whispers of myself bequeathing, their
affection me more clearly explaining,
To young men my problems offering—no dallier I—I
the muscle of their brains trying,
So I pass, a little time vocal, visible, contrary,
Afterward a melodious echo, passionately bent for (death
making me really undying,)
The best of me then when no longer visible, for toward
that I have been incessantly preparing.

What is there more, that I lag and pause and crouch
extended with unshut mouth ?
Is there a single final farewell ?

My songs cease, I abandon them,
From behind the screen where I hid I advance personally
solely to you.

Camerado, this is no book,
Who touches this touches a man,
(Is it night ? are we here together alone ?)
It is I you hold and who holds you,
I spring from the pages into your arms—decease calls
me forth.

O how your fingers drowse me,
Your breath falls around me like dew, your pulse lulls
the tympan of my ears,
I feel immersed from head to foot,
Delicious, enough.

Enough O deed impromptu and secret,
Enough O gliding present—enough O summ'd-up past.

Dear friend whoever you are take this kiss,
I give it especially to you, do not forget me,
I feel like one who has done work for the day to retire
awhile,

I receive now again of my many translations, from my
avatars ascending, while others doubtless await me,
An unknown sphere more real than I dream'd, more
direct, darts awakening rays about me, *So long !*

Remember my words, I may again return,
I love you, I depart from materials,
I am as one disembodied, triumphant, dead.

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